



★ VIRGINIA ★
DEPARTMENT *of* ELECTIONS

How to Run for Member Town Council

Ballot Access Requirements for the
April 8, 2025 Town of Marion
Member Town Council **Special Election**

Definitions

COMET – Electronic campaign finance filing system offered by the Department of Elections.

Incumbent – An officeholder seeking reelection to the same office.

Independent – an individual who is seeking to run in a General Election without running as a Republican or Democrat (may include a recognized party or no party)

Non-primary party candidate – an individual who is seeking the nomination of a political party by a means other than a primary

Political party – An organization that, at either of the two preceding statewide general elections, received at least 10 percent of the total vote cast for any statewide office filled in that election

Primary candidate – an individual who is seeking the nomination of a political party by running in a primary

Qualified voter – A person who is entitled to vote under the Virginia Constitution and is properly registered to vote (see [definition here](#))

Recognized political party – An organization that meets the requirements set out in Va. Code § [24.2-612](#)

Special Election – Any election that is held pursuant to law to fill a vacancy in office or to hold a referendum.

Va. Code – Virginia Code

VAC – Virginia Administrative Code

ELECT – The Virginia Department of Elections
1100 Bank Street, 1st Floor
Richmond, VA 23219

Key Icons



- Notes where to find information in the Code of Virginia or Virginia Administrative Code.



- Indicates beginning and/or ending deadlines for filing documents.



- Indicates information on where to file documents.



- Indicates additional information that may be helpful.

How candidates get on the ballot in VA

Follow these instructions to get on the ballot for:

- The Town of Marion Special Election on Tuesday, April 8, 2025.

Do you fulfill the basic qualifications to be a candidate? (Va. Code § [24.2-500](#))

- A resident of the Commonwealth for the year immediately preceding the election
- Qualified to vote for and hold the office sought or will be at the time of the election

What, when, and where do I file?

[This table is a summary. Find more information below.](#)

	What do I need to file?	Notes or other information	Where do I file this form?	When does filing open?	What is the deadline to file?
1	Certificate of Candidate Qualification (Statewide Office) ELECT-501(3) Va. Code §§ 24.2-501 24.2-503	Deemed to be filed by the deadline if mailed to ELECT on or before the deadline, postage prepaid by registered or certified mail. Receipt must show date mailed.	The general registrar of your locality of residence.	Non-primary party and independent candidates: Thursday, January 2, 2025	Friday, February 7, 2025
2	Statement of Economic Interest (SOEI) - State and Local Va. Code §§ 24.2-502 24.2-503	Deemed to be filed by the deadline if mailed to ELECT on or before the deadline, postage prepaid by registered or certified mail. Receipt must show date mailed.	The general registrar of your locality of residence. <i>See below for exceptions to the filing requirement</i>	Non-primary party and independent candidates: Thursday, January 2, 2025	Friday, February 7, 2025
3	Declaration of Candidacy SBE-505/520 Va. Code §§ 24.2-505 24.2-507	Must be filed with your Petitions of Qualified Voters (4)	Independent candidates: The general registrar of your locality of residence.	Non-primary party candidates are not required to file. Independent candidates: Thursday, January 2, 2025 Friday, February 7, 2025	

	What do I need to file?	Notes or other information	Where do I file this form?	When does filing open?	What is the deadline to file?
4	<p>Petitions of Qualified Voters ELECT-506/521</p> <p>Va. Code §§ 24.2-506 24.2-507</p> <p>Va. Admin Code 1 VAC 20-50-20 1 VAC 20-50-30</p>	<p>Candidates may begin collecting signatures on January 1, 2025. Petition pages are not required to be filed all at the same time; you may file pages throughout the filing window. However, the first petition page filed must be filed with your Declaration of Candidacy (3).</p>	<p>Independent candidates: The general registrar of your locality of residence.</p>	<p><i>Non-primary party candidates are not required to file.</i></p> <p>Independent candidates: Thursday, January 2, 2025</p>	<p>Friday, February 7, 2025</p>
5	<p>Statement of Organization</p> <p>Va. Code §§ 24.2 Chapter 9.3 24.2-947.1</p>	<p>Not required for ballot access.</p>	<p>Electronically in COMET, then print two copies, sign them, and submit to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Virginia Department of Elections 2. The general registrar of your locality of residence 	<p>Within 10 days of meeting specific conditions. See conditions listed below and in Va. Code § 24.2-947.1.</p>	
6	<p>Campaign Finance Reports</p> <p>§§ 24.2 Chapter 9.3</p>	<p>Not required for ballot access.</p>	<p>Electronically in COMET</p>	<p>According to the schedule published by the Department of Elections.</p>	

Follow these steps to file your candidacy:

1. Fill out and submit a [Certificate of Candidate Qualification \(ELECT-501\(3\)\)](#)



Reference Virginia Code §§ [24.2-501](#) and [24.2-503](#).



Non-primary party and independent candidates:

File starting **January 2, 2025**.

File ending **February 7, 2025**.

This form is deemed to be filed by the deadline if mailed to ELECT on or before the deadline, postage prepaid by registered or certified mail. Receipt must show date mailed. ELECT may request a scanned copy of the receipt.



Mail or deliver this form to the [general registrar](#) of your locality of residence.



The campaign contact information provided on this form will be included in the candidate list posted on ELECT's [website](#).

2. Fill out and submit a [Statement of Economic Interests \(SOEI\) - State and Local](#)



Reference Virginia Code §§ [24.2-502](#) and [24.2-503](#).



Non-primary party and independent candidates:

File starting **January 2, 2025**.

File ending **February 7, 2025**.

This form is deemed to be filed by the deadline if mailed to ELECT on or before the deadline, postage prepaid by registered or certified mail. Receipt must show date mailed. ELECT may request a scanned copy of the receipt.



Mail or deliver this form to the [general registrar](#) of your locality of residence.



Candidates not required to file:

- Incumbents (officeholders seeking reelection to the same office) who filed an SOEI pursuant to [Va. Code § 30.110](#) are not required to file with ELECT.
- Candidates for member of the governing body or elected school board of any county, city, or town with a population of 3,500 persons or less.

Contact the Virginia Conflict of Interest and Ethics Advisory Council for help with completing your SOEI form.

- Email: ethics@dls.virginia.gov
- Phone Number: 804-698-1848

3 Fill out and submit a [Declaration of Candidacy \(SBE-505/520\)](#).

Non-primary party candidates are not required to file.



Reference Virginia Code §§ [24.2-505](#), [24.2-507](#)



Independent candidates:

File starting **January 2, 2025**.

File ending **February 7, 2025**.

The Declaration of Candidacy **must be filed with** your Petitions of Qualified Voters (4).

The form must be **received** by the applicable deadline listed above. A postmark or other mailing service timestamp does not qualify.



Independent candidates:

Mail or deliver this form to the [general registrar](#) of your locality of residence



Effective July 1, 2024 ([HB90/SB109](#)) the declaration of candidacy was revised to include a statement that if the signer's name appears on the primary ballot and they are not nominated then their name is not to be printed on the ballots for that office in the succeeding general election.

5 Collect petition signatures and submit [Petitions of Qualified Voters \(SBE-506/521\)](#).

Non-primary party candidates are not required to file.



Reference:

- Virginia Code §§ [24.2-506](#), [24.2-507](#)
- Virginia Administrative Code [1 VAC 20-50-20](#) and [1 VAC 20-50-30](#).
- Local charters for additional or different requirements. Contact the local attorney for guidance.



Independent candidates:

Collect signatures:

- Starting **January 1, 2025**.
- Ending **February 7, 2025**.

Submit pages:

- Starting **January 2, 2025**.
- Ending **February 7, 2025**.



Independent candidates:

Mail or deliver petition pages to the [general registrar](#) of your locality of residence



For a candidate for:

Number of petition signatures you need from qualified voters

- | | |
|--|---------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Membership on the governing body or elected school board... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ of any town that has at least 1,500 but not more than 3,500 registered voters | 50 signatures |
|--|---------------|

Effective July 1, 2024 ([SB165](#)) candidates may begin collecting petition signatures on January first of the year in which the election is held.

Petition pages are not required to be filed all at the same time; you may file pages throughout the filing window. However, **the first petition page filed must be filed with your Declaration of Candidacy (3)**.

The pages must be **received** by the applicable deadline listed above. A postmark or other mailing service timestamp does not qualify.

Independent candidates:

May request notification of any problems that can be corrected before the filing deadline. Make this request by email to the [general registrar](#) of your locality of residence. The general registrar will provide the requested information when able but cannot guarantee a timely response as it will be dependent on the processing of the petition pages.

If notified by the general registrar that the required number of qualified voter signatures was not submitted, an appeal can be submitted to the local Electoral Board. The appeal must be submitted **within 5 days** of the disqualification notice being issued. **You will need to prove that you have the correct number of signatures from qualified voters before the deadline.** Find more information in [1 VAC 20-50-30](#).

Things to remember about petitions:

Petition Pages must...

- Be on the Virginia Department of Elections [form](#). The form cannot be altered in any way.
- Be printed on one piece of paper, front and back. If the back is on a second piece of paper, the entire page (front and back) will be rendered invalid.
- Contain the signature, printed full name, and full registered residence address of each qualified voter and the date the voter signed. The last four (4) digits of the qualified voter's Social Security Number (SSN) would help in confirming the voter but is not required.

The petition circulator...

- Must be a legal resident of the United States.
- Cannot be a minor.
- Can be an individual who was convicted of a felony only if their voting rights are restored.
- Cannot be the circulator of the page on which they signed as a voter.
- Must sign the affidavit on each page they circulated in front of a notary.

When collecting your petition signatures, it is helpful to remember that...

- Because not all the people who sign petitions are qualified voters, ELECT recommends collecting at least 1 1/2 times the number of signatures required.
- Giving clear instructions on how a voter should fill out the page (provide all information in legible handwriting) will better the chances of a signature being accepted.
- [1VAC20-50-20](#) lists material omissions for petition signatures and pages. If your petition has a material omission, it may render the page or signature invalid.

The next two requirements relate to Campaign Finance accounts and reporting. While these are not ballot access requirements, non-compliance will result in penalties and the inability to qualify for, perform the duties of, or receive a salary or emoluments from the office.

6. Fill out and submit a [Statement of Organization for a Candidate \(SOO\)](#).



Reference

- Virginia Code Title 24.2 [Chapter 9.3](#).
- Campaign Finance [Laws and Policies](#)



File within 10 days of performing one of the following:

- Accept a contribution.
- Spend any funds.
- Pay a filing fee.
- File a Certificate of Candidate Qualification.
- Appoint a campaign treasurer, campaign committee, or campaign depository.



Complete electronically in [COMET](#), print two copies, sign both, then mail or deliver according to the instructions in [COMET](#) to:

- The Virginia Department of Elections.
- The [general registrar](#) of your locality of residence.



Campaign finance filing requirements are not a requirement of ballot access.

If you do not comply with all campaign finance requirements:

- You will have to pay penalties.
- You will not be permitted to qualify for any office, enter upon the duties thereof, or receive any salary or emoluments therefrom.

7. Submit Campaign Finance Reports



Reference

- Virginia Code Title 24.2 [Chapter 9.3](#).
- Campaign Finance [Laws and Policies](#)



Submit reports according to the [schedule](#) published by the Virginia Department of Elections.



Complete electronically in [COMET](#).

How do I withdraw my candidacy?



Reference Virginia Code § [24.2-612.2](#)



A withdrawing candidate should submit their withdrawal notice with enough time before absentee voting commences to ensure their name is removed from the ballot.



Mail, deliver, or email to your local [General Registrar](#)'s Office. The General Registrar will notify other affected General Registrars and/or the Department of Elections, as appropriate.



To be withdrawn from the ballot you must submit a signed and notarized notice of withdrawal declaring your intent to withdraw from the election. Use the Department of Elections' [Candidate Withdrawal Form](#) (ELECT-612.2).

Effective January 1, 2025 ([HB55/SB131](#))

- Withdrawal notices must now be notarized.
- If a candidate submits a notarized withdrawal notice to the general registrar between 44 days and 7 days before a primary election, and the result is only one remaining candidate that would then be unopposed, the remaining candidate will be declared the party's nominee for the office sought and the primary election will be cancelled.

Qualified Independent Candidate that Wishes to be Recognized as a Third-Party Candidate on the Ballot

Virginia Code § [24.2-613](#) allows for political party identification on the ballot for federal, statewide, and General Assembly offices only.

Local office candidates may seek party recognition for the purpose of ballot order, but the party identification will not be on the ballot.



Reference Virginia Code § [24.2-613](#).



File starting **January 2, 2025**.
File ending **February 7, 2025**.



Mail, deliver, or email (ea@elections.virginia.gov) to the Department of Elections.



The Department of Elections recommends that the independent candidate provide this information to the State Chair of their party. This presumably will assure that the party will provide the nominee with what they need to file with the Department of Elections by the appropriate deadline.

General Disclaimer

The electronic version of this Candidate Bulletin can be found on the Department of Elections website:

<https://www.elections.virginia.gov/candidatepac-info/candidate-bulletins/index.html>

Candidates are responsible for complying with all current applicable local, state, and federal laws and regulations.

This Candidate Bulletin provides an overview of Virginia electoral requirements only. It does not purport to provide legal advice or binding statements of official policy. Rather, the Candidate Bulletin describes election law found in the Code of Virginia. Applicable laws and regulations are subject to change in content and interpretation.