



## INTRODUCTION TO RUNNING FOR LOCAL PUBLIC OFFICES

- The Lycoming County Office of Voter Services is located on the first floor of Third Street Plaza, 33 West Third Street, Williamsport, PA. The mailing address is 48 West Third Street, Williamsport, PA 17701. The phone number is (570) 327-2267.
- Candidates for local offices (magisterial district judges; county, city, borough, township, school district, and local party offices; constables) in Lycoming County may run for public office by filing nomination petitions with this office. Candidates for federal offices, statewide offices, state legislative offices, the Court of Common Pleas, and state party offices must file their nomination petitions with the PA Department of State.
- It is the candidate's responsibility to determine if they are qualified to hold the public office being sought, and if they can afford to commit their time, money, and energy to a campaign.
- The first day on which candidates for local offices may circulate nomination petitions is the thirteenth (13<sup>th</sup>) Tuesday before a municipal primary. Nomination petitions are legal documents and they are only available in this office. Candidates may contact this office in late January or early February to inquire when petitions will be available.
- The last day on which candidates for local offices may circulate nomination petitions is the tenth (10<sup>th</sup>) Tuesday before a municipal primary. All nomination petitions and other required documents must be filed by 5:00pm on that day in order for the candidate's name to appear on the primary ballot.
- The information in this document is strictly introductory in scope and should not be construed as legal advice. Filers are responsible for ensuring the correctness and completeness of all documents; the Office of Voter Services is not responsible for errors and omissions.
- The Office of Voter Services cannot provide legal, tax, or accounting advice. All candidates are strongly advised to solicit advice from a licensed professional in the appropriate field in advance of statutory deadlines and before filing documents with this office.



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## How to Gain Access to the Ballot

- Citizens affiliated with the Republican Party or Democratic Party who are interested in running for a local office must circulate and file *Nomination Petitions* with our office in order to gain access to the spring primary ballot. *Nomination Petitions* are circulated and filed between the 13<sup>th</sup> Tuesday and the 10<sup>th</sup> Tuesday preceding a spring primary. The required number of signatures varies by office and municipality; the Office of Voter Services can provide this number. The Republican and Democratic candidates who receive the most votes from the voters of their respective parties during the spring primary will be nominated to appear together on the November election ballot.
- Citizens affiliated with minor political parties and political bodies (commonly known as “third parties”) who are interested in running for a local office must file *Nomination Papers* with our office in order to directly access the November election ballot. *Nomination Papers* are circulated between the 10<sup>th</sup> Wednesday preceding a spring primary and August 1<sup>st</sup>. The required number of signatures is a percentage of votes cast for the same office within the same election district in a previous election, which varies from year to year; the Office of Voter Services can provide this number.
- All candidates for public office must complete a PA Ethics Commission *Statement of Financial Interests* and file a copy with the Office of Voter Services when filing the nomination paperwork. Instructions for completing and filing the form with the appropriate authorities are included with the form.
- *Nomination Petitions* and *Nomination Papers* are only available in hard copy form at the Office of Voter Services. Candidates should call in advance to confirm that petitions are ready. The *Statement of Financial Interests* is available on our website or as hard copy in our office.
- Filing nomination documents may entail a filing fee depending on the office and/or municipality. The Office of Voter Services can quote the appropriate filing fee.



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## **Establishing a Campaign Committee (Optional)**

A candidate may authorize a campaign committee to accept contributions and make expenditures on his or her behalf. The campaign committee must have a designated chairperson and treasurer in order to operate. The candidate may serve in one of these roles, but no person may serve in both roles. The *Political Committee Registration Statement* form (to establish a committee) and the *Authorization for a Political Committee to Receive Funds on Behalf of a Candidate* form (to authorize the committee to accept contributions and make expenditures on the candidate's behalf) can be downloaded from our website and are available as hard copy in our office.

## **Campaign Finance Reporting**

All candidates for local offices must file regular campaign finance reports with the Office of Voter Services at specific times during the election cycle. Candidates and their campaign committees must keep separate records of all contributions received and expenditures made in support of their run for office. Any contribution or expenditure of money (including debts or loans), gifts, goods, services, or any other thing intended to influence the outcome of an election must be reported. Reporting forms can be downloaded from our website and are available as hard copy in our office.

## **Restrictions on Electioneering**

No person, including a candidate, may electioneer or solicit votes when inside a polling place. All persons, except those persons authorized to be inside the polling place (election officers, clerks, machine inspectors, overseers, watchers, persons in the course of voting, persons lawfully giving assistance to voters, and constables), must remain at least ten (10) feet from the polling place during the time the polls are open. Candidates may never enter a polling place except for the express purpose of casting their own vote.

## **Watchers**

A candidate may appoint two watchers for each polling place where the candidate's name appears on the ballot; however, only one watcher per candidate may be present inside a polling place at any one time. Candidates interested in appointing watchers should contact the Office of Voter Services.

## **Election Results**

Unofficial election results are posted to the Lycoming County webpage at [www.lyco.org](http://www.lyco.org) after 8:00pm on Election Night as precincts report in. The Lycoming County Board of Elections begins its official computation and canvass of election returns at 9:00am on the third day following an election. A candidate or his or her attorney is entitled to be present during the Official Count.