



Guide for Candidates and Campaign Workers Regarding 2021 Nomination Petitions

This guide provides information you will need if you are a candidate or campaign worker and you plan to submit nomination petitions to appear on the ballot in the municipal primary held on May 18, 2021. These guidelines may be updated as needed.

Best Practices for Circulating Petitions

To mitigate the spread of COVID-19, the Department of State (“The Department”) urges you to follow these recommendations when collecting signatures:

- If you host in-person events, adhere to the occupancy limits set forth in Governor Wolf’s November 23rd [order](#), and enforce the use of face masks in accordance with the Pennsylvania Department of Health (DOH) [Updated Order Requiring Universal Face Coverings](#).
- If you circulate door-to-door, wear a mask when you are in proximity to other people, including when you approach someone’s home and interact with voters outdoors.
- Maintain a distance of at least 6 feet from others, even when wearing a mask, in accordance with [CDC guidance](#) and the DOH [order](#) mentioned above.
- Consider providing a fresh petition page to each signer and asking signers to use their own pen to minimize contact with shared surfaces.
- Consider providing hand sanitizer and sanitizing wipes to promote hand hygiene.
- Clean shared surfaces, such as clip boards and pens, between each use.
- If a signer asks you to leave a petition page with them to sign on their own, you may do so as long as it is a blank petition page and the signer also completes the statement of circulator on the back of the petition page.

Unsworn Statement in Lieu of Notarized Candidate’s Affidavit

Act 2020-15, signed into law on April 20, 2020, allows a candidate to sign an unsworn declaration and submit it with the petition packet instead of having the accompanying completed candidate’s affidavit notarized. (Note: The unsworn declaration must be affixed to the candidate’s affidavit.) The unsworn statement will be available for download on the Department’s [Running for Office web page](#).

What to Expect When Filing at the Department of State

The petition filing process at the Department of State will be different this year than in previous years. The Department appreciates your cooperation and patience as we implement new procedures to help protect you and Department staff from COVID-19. Please review the information below before you file

your petition in person. For information about the petition filing process in your county, contact your [county election office](#).

Deadline and Dates

The deadline to submit your nomination petition is 5:00 p.m. on March 9, 2021. Petitions must be received by that time to be considered timely.

You can file nomination petitions with the Department of State February 16 - March 9, 2021 from 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. The Department encourages you to file early to avoid long lines at the screening station during the final days of the petition filing period.

Location

The Department of State will accept petitions in person at the address below. *You must enter the building through the North St. entrance.*

Keystone Building
400 North St.
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Health and Safety Precautions for Filers

You are required to wear a face covering and maintain a distance of 6 feet from other people while in the Keystone Building.

You must also pass both a security screening and a health screening to enter the building. The health screening will include a temperature check and four screening questions.

- **Temperature check.** If your temperature is 100.4 or above, you will not be allowed to access the building.
- **Screening questions.** If you answer “yes” to **any** of these questions, you will not be allowed to access the building.
 1. Have you experienced any of the following symptoms in the past 48 hours?
 - fever or chills
 - cough
 - shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
 - fatigue
 - muscle or body aches
 - headache
 - new loss of taste or smell
 - sore throat congestion or runny nose
 - nausea or vomiting
 - diarrhea
 2. Within the past 14 days, have you been in close physical contact (6 feet or closer for a cumulative total of 15 minutes) with:

- Anyone who is known to have confirmed COVID-19?
- Anyone who has any symptoms consistent with COVID-19?
- 3. Are you isolating or quarantining because you may have been exposed to a person with COVID-19 or are worried that you may be sick with COVID-19?
- 4. Are you currently waiting on the results of a COVID-19 test?

If you pass the health screening:

- You will be directed to a waiting area where Department of State staff will retrieve your petition from you.
- *You will not be in the room where your petition is reviewed.* Instead, you will remain in the waiting area with other filers while Department staff review your petition.
- If there is a problem with your petition packet, Department staff may reject it and return it to you. *Your petition is only considered timely if it is received by the deadline AND accepted.*
- If your petition is accepted, Department staff will give you a receipt and printed information about the ballot lottery.

If you do not pass the health screening:

- Department staff will take your petition papers but ask you to leave the building. *Staff will request your phone number and make sure your phone number and email address are included in the packet you submit.*
- If there are any problems with your petition, they will call you and let you know to come back and pick up your petition packet so you can fix any errors. So, you may want to remain nearby until you receive notice that your petition is accepted.
- If your petition and it is accepted, Department staff will send you an email with your receipt and information about the ballot lottery.

Filing by Mail

You also have the option to file your nomination petition by mail. You may use the paid delivery service of your choice. Keep in mind *it must be received by the deadline to be considered timely.* After your petition is accepted, Department staff will send you an email with your receipt and information about the ballot lottery.

If you send your petition by mail, the Department recommends that you:

- Send your petition packet well in advance of the deadline. (This will allow you time to fix any errors before the deadline in the event there is a problem with your petition.)
- Use an expedited service **with a guaranteed delivery date** to ensure prompt delivery.
- Track your package so you are notified when it is delivered.

If you mail your petition, you assume the risk of your petition arriving after the deadline.

Ballot Position Lottery

The ballot position lottery will take place on March 17, 2021 in the Keystone Building. The same security and health screenings outlined above will be in place for the ballot lottery.

Additional details about the time and procedure for the ballot lottery will be provided when you file your petition. Please plan to arrive at the scheduled time and be aware that you may not be allowed to enter the building at other times due to occupancy limits.

Requesting Copies of Nomination Petitions:

To request electronic copies of nomination petitions, please contact the Bureau of Elections and Notaries at 1-877-868-3772 (option 3). Copies of nomination petitions WILL NOT be posted online.

Service of Objections:

March 16 is the last day to file objections to nomination petitions. Service of objections on the Secretary of the Commonwealth should be made at 400 North Street, Keystone Building in Harrisburg, PA. More detailed instructions on how to notify DOS staff that you've arrived to serve objections will be posted outside the Keystone Building; however, it is strongly recommended that you call Elissa Dauberman at 717.346.9005 in advance to make arrangements for service of objections. As a reminder, by law, service on the Secretary of the Commonwealth must be made by 5 p.m. on the last day to file objections (March 16).

Questions?

Contact the Department of State at 1-877-VOTESPA (1-877-868-3772), option 3.