

## Petitions (Rules Governing Petitions)

County boards of election will provide at least one copy of a candidate petition form upon request. Candidates are permitted to make copies of the forms in the manner they were provided.

Petitions contain three separate sections:

1. the Statement of Candidacy,
2. the Nominating Petition, and
3. the Circulator's Statement.

### Rules Governing Petitions

1. The "Statement of Candidacy" portion of each petition must be completely filled out and signed by the candidate(s) before being circulated. ([R.C. 3513.07](#), [3513.09](#), [3513.261](#))
2. Only qualified electors may sign the nominating section of a petition. An elector's qualifications are determined as of the date the petition is filed. ([R.C. 3501.38\(A\)](#))  
An "elector" is a person having the qualifications provided by law to vote. In order for a person to be a qualified elector to vote, the person must be a U.S. citizen, 18 years old, a resident of the state for 30 days, and registered to vote at least 30 days immediately prior to the date of the election at which he or she wishes to vote.
3. Each signature, written in ink, must be an original signature of an elector or the elector's duly appointed attorney-in-fact who is acting pursuant to [R.C. 3501.382](#). "Signature" is statutorily defined as a person's written, cursive-style legal mark written in his or her own hand unless the elector does not use a cursive-style mark during the course of his or her regular business or legal affairs. ([R.C. 3501.38 \(B\)](#), [3501.381](#), [3501.011](#), [3519.051](#))
4. Each signer's residence address and the date of signing must be placed on the petition after his or her signature. ([R.C. 3501.38 \(C\)](#))
5. Petitions for a candidate for party nomination must be signed and circulated by qualified electors who are members of the same political party as the candidate.  
Note: A person convicted of a felony is not eligible to circulate any candidate petition or recall, initiative or referendum petition.  
([R.C. 2961.01\(B\)](#), [2967.17\(B\)](#))  
An elector is considered to be a member of a political party if he or she voted in the primary election of that party within the preceding two calendar years, or if he or she did not vote in any other party's primary election within the preceding two calendar years.  
([R.C. 3513.05](#), 7th paragraph)
6. a. A candidate may circulate his or her own petition, although he or she may not sign his or her own petition as an elector. For the purpose of circulating his or her own petition, a candidate is exempted from the party affiliation requirements described above. ([R.C. 3513.191\(C\)\(4\)](#))  
b. A circulator may not sign the same petition paper that he or she is circulating; a circulator may, however, sign a petition paper being circulated for the same candidacy by a different circulator.
7. After circulating the petition, the circulator must sign a statement, under penalty of election falsification indicating the following:
  - a. The number of signatures contained on the petition;
  - b. That the circulator witnessed the affixing of each signature on the petition;

- c. That all signers, to the best of the circulator's belief and knowledge, were qualified to sign; and
- d. That each signature is, to the best of the circulator's knowledge and belief, the signature of the person whose signature it purports to be.

If a circulator knowingly permits an unqualified person to sign a petition paper or permits a person to write a name other than the person's own on the petition paper, that petition paper is invalid; otherwise, the signature of a person not qualified to sign shall be rejected, but shall not invalidate the other valid signatures on the petition paper. ([R.C. 3501.38 \(E\) and \(F\)](#))

- 8. Once a petition has been filed, it cannot be changed, supplemented, or, in the case of a candidate's petition, withdrawn. Certain initiative and referendum petitions may be withdrawn in accordance with law. ([R.C. 3501.38\(I\)](#))
- 9. At least one part petition containing the candidate's original signature must be filed at the same time all part petitions are filed. ([R.C. 3501.38\(K\)](#), [3513.09](#))
- 10. Each petition paper shall be circulated by one person only, and shall contain signatures of qualified electors of one county only. When petitions are circulated in a district that contains more than one county, separate petition papers must be circulated in each county. ([R.C. 3501.38](#), [3513.05](#), [3513.07](#), [3513.261](#))
- 11. No petition may contain more than three times the minimum number of required signatures. ([R.C. 3513.05](#), [3513.257](#), [3513.259](#))
- 12. All petitions must contain the following statement in boldface capital letters: "WHOEVER COMMITS ELECTION FALSIFICATION IS GUILTY OF A FELONY OF THE FIFTH DEGREE." ([R.C. 3501.38\(J\)](#), [3599.36](#))  
(**Note:** The penalties for a fifth degree felony are 6 to 12 months in prison and/or a fine of \$2500.)
- 13. All petitions remain open for public inspection, under reasonable regulations, at the board of elections at which they were filed. ([R.C. 3513.05](#), [3513.262](#))