

CITY OF ST. FRANCIS

CANDIDATES HANDBOOK

FOR ELECTIONS

NECESSARY FORMS

Any candidate for election to local public office must register a candidate committee with the Municipal Clerk as soon as:

- The individual takes any of the following actions;
 - Files nomination papers with the filing officer
 - Receives a contribution, makes a disbursement, or gives consent for another person to do so in order to bring about the individual's nomination;
- The individual holds public office and is the subject of a recall petition; or
- The individual holds a state or local office

Each of the following forms must be completed and filed on time for candidates for municipal office, in order for the candidate's name to be placed on the ballot for the Spring Primary and/or the spring General Election: Campaign Finance Registration Statement, Nomination Papers, and Declaration of Candidacy.

In the City of St. Francis, candidates for municipal office must file forms and reports with the filing officer. The filing officer is the City Clerk, and candidates should contact the City Clerk (414) 481-2300 with any questions.

NOMINATION PAPERS

Prior to announcing your candidacy for office or circulation of nomination papers, you must file a Campaign Registration Statement in the City Clerk's Office. **This must be done by the deadline date of November 26, 2025, since our offices are closed for the Thanksgiving holiday on Friday, November 28th.** The first day for circulating nomination papers is December 1, and the deadline for filing nomination papers is **5:00 PM on the first Tuesday in January (January 6, 2026)** (State Statutes 8.10) *If all papers are not turned in by the deadline, the candidate's name will not be placed on the ballot.*

Candidates for Mayor, Judge, or Alderperson need to complete the following forms:

1. **Campaign Finance Committee Registration Statement, Form CF-1L** Candidates should file a campaign finance registration statement as soon as the intent to seek elective office is known, before funds are collected or spent. All candidates should file a campaign registration statement or amended statement before circulating nomination papers. The candidate's name will not be placed on the ballot if this form is not filed on time.
2. **Nomination Papers, Form EL-169** Nomination papers may be circulated any time after December 1, and after the candidate has filed a Campaign Registration Statement with the City Clerk. Signers must include their complete signature, legible printed name, complete address including checking the City box and printing St. Francis, WI 53235, and date of signing. **Each nomination paper must be signed by the Circulator.** The instructions for the completion of the nomination papers are on the back of each paper, and should be followed carefully.

For the City of St. Francis, 20-40 signatures are required for the office of Alderperson, and 50-100 signatures are required for the office of Mayor or Judge. It is always a good idea to have more than the minimum, just in case some signatures might be declared invalid.

3. **Declaration of Candidacy, EL-162** This form must be filed with the City Clerk no later than the deadline for filing nomination papers or the candidate's name will not appear on the ballot. The candidate must indicate how their name should appear on the official ballot.

This form must be sworn to and signed in the presence of a notary or person authorized to administer oaths, such as the Municipal Clerk.

4. **Notification of Noncandidacy, EL-163.** The purpose of this form is to notify the filing officer and the electorate of an incumbent office holder's intent NOT to seek reelection to the same office, and to avoid an extension of the deadline for filing nomination papers. Incumbent office holders who do not intend to seek re-election to the same office should file the Notification of Noncandidacy no later than 5:00 PM on the second Friday preceding the deadline for filing nomination papers. **Please file Non-candidacy papers by Friday, December 26, 2025.**

Following the submittal of all of the above forms to the City Clerk, the forms will be checked for validity. For each election, the Municipal Clerk will draw the candidates' names by lot for order placement on the ballot.

SIGN RESTRICTIONS (Mun. Code Chapter 380)

Political and Campaign Signs. Political and campaign signs do not require a permit. Signs containing a political message as defined in sec. 12.04, Stats. are subject to the following regulations:

Signs identifying or promoting candidates for public office may be erected without authorization by the building inspector, but will need permission of the property owner, to be removed 2 weeks following the election to which the sign relates. In Residence Districts, such signs may not exceed 9 square feet in area. This would not apply to a sign, which is affixed to a permanent structure and does not extend beyond the perimeter of the structure if the sign does not obstruct a window, door, fire escape, ventilation shaft or other area which is required by an applicable building code to remain unobstructed. In order to ensure traffic and pedestrian safety, no sign identifying or promoting candidates for public office may be placed within 5 feet of the sidewalk or front property line. No such signs may have an electrical, mechanical, or audio auxiliary.

CAMPAIGN FINANCING (State Statutes Chapter 11)

Candidates *and* incumbents must file an annual Campaign Finance Report (CF-1L). There is a filing exemption box (A28) if a candidate anticipates that he/she will not accept contributions, make disbursements, or incur loans and other obligations in an **aggregate** amount exceeding \$2,500 in a calendar year.

An individual needs to register a committee as soon as practicable (§ 11.0202(1)(a)) when any of the following are true:

- The individual has filed nomination papers (§ 11.0101(1)(a)1)
- The individual is nominated as a candidate by a political party (§ 11.0101(1)(a)2)
- The individual receives a contribution or makes a disbursement to support their nomination or election to public office (§ 11.0101(1)(a)3)
- The individual holds a state or local office (§ 11.0101(1)(c))

Two additional criteria apply for ballot access:

- If the individual has been nominated as a candidate by caucus, the candidate must file their registration statement within 5 days of their nomination (§ 8.05(1)(j)2)

- If an individual wishes to run as a write-in candidate in an election where there is one or more certified candidates, the individual must file a registration statement by noon on the Friday immediately preceding the election or votes for the individual will not be counted (§ 7.50(2)(em))

If a candidate does not meet exemption criteria, he/she is required to file a CF-2L if they have activity during a reporting period OR a CF-2NA if they have no activity during that reporting period.

If a decision is made at a later date to exceed the \$2,500 limit on contributions and disbursements, the candidate must file an amendment CF-1L form within 10 days of the change.

The Campaign Finance Report (CF-2L), for all contributions of \$2,000 or more (for non-exempt candidates), is a sixteen page form provided to candidates by the City Clerk or can be found at [here](#) . The no-activity form CF-2NA can be found [here](#). All reports can be found here: <https://ethics.wi.gov> .

FINANCIAL RECORDS DURING EXEMPTION

When the candidate is exempt, he/she is required to file a CF-1L each reporting period. The campaign finance filing calendar may be found here: <https://ethics.wi.gov/Pages/CampaignFinance/ReportPeriods.aspx> . The candidate or treasurer is required to keep financial records adequate to meet the requirements of campaign finance law. This means that a record must be kept of all contributions to the committee and of all expenditures.

The contribution limit for local offices is \$500; the limitation applies cumulatively to the entire primary and election campaign in which the candidate is participating.

There is an exception for anonymous contributions of no more than \$10. A committee must itemize every disbursement exceeding \$20.

A candidate who is exempt from filing campaign finance reports may use a personal account as the campaign depository. A separate campaign depository account is not required.

IN KIND CONTRIBUTIONS

An in-kind contribution is any goods, service, or property offered to the campaign committee free or at less than the usual cost. For example, if a campaign worker purchases stamps that are used for a mailing and is not reimbursed for the cost of the stamps, the value of the stamps is an in-kind contribution to the campaign committee from the campaign worker. When an individual is paid to work on behalf of a candidate by a political committee or some other individual, the payment for those services is an in-kind contribution to the campaign committee. Consultant services are often provided to a campaign committee in this manner. If a political committee or individual offers to provide food and beverages for a fund-raiser at less than ordinary market price, the difference between the ordinary market price and the cost to the campaign as an in-kind contribution from the political committee or individual.

PROHIBITED CONTRIBUTIONS (State Statute 11.11)

Certain contributions are prohibited by Wisconsin law. A committee may not accept the following types of contributions:

- Anonymous contributions of more than \$10.
- Cash contributions of more than \$100
- Contributions given in the name of someone other than the contributor (these are laundered contributions)
- Contributions from cooperatives or corporations
- Contributions in excess of limits set by law
- Contributions from foreign nationals

ELECTION DAY CAMPAIGN RESTRICTIONS (State Statute 12.03 & 12.04)

Persons are prohibited from electioneering on public property within 100 feet of an entrance to a building contain a polling place, or engage in any activity, which disrupts voting or interferes with the orderly conduct of the election. This prohibition does not apply to electioneering on private property within 100 feet of an entrance to a polling place. The placement of election signs on private property with the 100-foot radius is permissible.

State Statute 12.04(2) state that any individual may place a sign containing a political message upon residential property owned or occupied by that individual during an election campaign period. The City Clerk, Election Inspector, or police officer may remove posters or other advertising, which is placed violation of this section.

DISCLAIMERS (State Statute 11.13)

Every printed advertisement, billboard, handbill, sample ballot, television or radio advertisement, or other communication requires an attribution statement if:

- It contains "express advocacy" and a committee pays for it by any contribution or disbursement (WIS. STAT. § 11.1303(2)(a) and (b));
- It contains "express advocacy," it is paid for or reimbursed by any person other than a committee, and the cost exceeds \$2,500 (WIS. STAT. § 11.1303(2)(c)); or,
- It contains statement(s) made for the purpose of influencing the recall from, or retention of, an official holding a state or local office (WIS. STAT. § 11.1303(2)(em)).

"Express advocacy" means a communication that contains terms such as the following with reference to a clearly identified candidate and that unambiguously relates to the election or defeat of that candidate.

- Vote for
- Elect
- Support
- Cast your ballot for
- (Candidate name) for (an elective office)
- Vote against
- Defeat

- Reject

WIS. STAT. § 11.0101(11).

Political action committees, independent expenditure committees, and other persons required to submit an affirmation under oath (See WIS. STAT.

§§ 11.0505(1)(b)6., 11.0605(1)(b)6., and 11.1001(1)(b)6.) must also include the words "Not authorized by any candidate or candidate's agent or committee" in addition to the standard "Paid for by (name)" language in every communication containing express advocacy. WIS. STAT. § 11.1303(2)(d).

A communication which is paid for by political funds must contain a disclaimer or attribution statement identifying the source of the funds paying for the communication. This includes every printed advertisement, billboard, handbill, sample ballot, television or radio advertisement or other communication paid for by political funds. Disclaimers should be included on each separate page of a political communication, including letterhead and enclosures. Disclaimers should also be on items such as T-shirts, bumper stickers, and yard signs. The disclaimer **must** use the words **"Paid for by"** (abbreviations should not be used for this language) followed by the name of the committee or group making the payment or assuming responsibility for the communication and the name of the treasurer or other authorized agent. When the communication is being paid for through an in-kind contribution, it must bear the disclaimer of the recipient campaign committee. Abbreviations may not be used for the name of a candidate or campaign committee.

No disclaimer is required on:

- Personal correspondence not reproduced by machine for distribution.
- A single personal item, which is not reproduced or manufactured by machine or other equipment.
- Nominations papers even if the papers contain biographical information.
- Pins, buttons, pens, balloons, nail files, and similar small items on which a disclaimer cannot be conveniently printed.
- Envelopes which have campaign committee identification printed on them.

FORMATS FOR DISCLAIMERS

When a communication is paid for by a candidate without a committee, or paid for by an individual, the disclaimer should read **"Paid for by Mary Smith"**.

When the communication is paid for by the campaign committee of a candidate or by a political committee, the disclaimer should read: **"Paid for by Friends for Mary Smith for Mayor, John Jones, Treasurer"** or **"Paid for by the committee for voters, John Jones, Treasurer"**.

When the communication is an independent expenditure, either supporting or opposing a candidate, the disclaimer should read: **"Paid for by the Committee for Voters, John Jones, Treasurer. Not authorized by any candidate or candidate's agent or committee"**.

Post-Election:

- If you win, you must remain registered as a committee while you are in office. During nonelection years, you may wish to go on "exempt status" – this means that as long as you have less than \$2,000 in activity per year, you do not have to file campaign finance reports. WIS. STAT. § 11.0101(1)(c).

- If you lose, and you wish to terminate your committee, you must make sure the committee has a \$0 cash balance, and \$0 in outstanding obligations and loans. If you wish to keep the committee active for a future candidacy, you may wish to go on “exempt status” so you do not have to file reports
- For more information on exempt status and terminating a committee, please refer to the [Local Candidate Committee Manual](#)

Further Reading:

This document provides a concise overview of the lifecycle of an elected local official: [The Lifecycle of a Candidate Committee](#) (This PowerPoint uses an older version of form CF-1L, but the information is still the same.)

[Local Candidates Committee Handbook](#) – WI Ethics Commission