

1S-2.045 Candidate Petition Process.

(1) Qualification by Petition. A person who seeks to qualify as a candidate for any office and who meets the petition requirements of this rule and Sections 99.095 and 105.035, F.S., is not required to pay the qualifying fee or party assessment required by Chapters 99 and 105, F.S.

(2) Required Number of Signatures. A candidate shall obtain the number of signatures of voters in the geographical area represented by the office sought equal to at least 1 percent of the total number of registered voters of that geographical area, as shown by the compilation by the Department of State for the immediately preceding general election. Special district candidates may qualify by obtaining at least 25 signatures of voters in the geographical area represented by the office sought. Except for special district candidates who have not collected contributions and whose only expense is the signature verification fee and federal candidates, signatures may not be obtained until the candidate has filed the appointment of campaign treasurer and designation of campaign depository pursuant to Section 106.021, F.S.

(3) Format of Petition.

(a) The format of a candidate petition shall be in accordance with Form DS-DE 104 (effective 10/10), entitled "Candidate Petition." Form DS-DE 104 is hereby incorporated by reference and is available from the Division of Elections, Room 316, R. A. Gray Building, 500 South Bronough Street, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0250, (850) 245-6240, or by download from the Division of Elections' rules webpage or forms webpage at: <http://elections.myflorida.com>.

(b) Form DS-DE 104 must be reproduced for use by candidates in its exact wording and format without any changes in its text or format, except the DS-DE 104 may be reduced or enlarged proportionally in size as a whole document. Candidates may have the DS-DE 104 translated into a minority language if the format of the form and its blank entries remain the same. If a translated version is made, the DS-DE 104 may be made into a two-sided form with one side in English and the other side in a minority language; however, a voter shall complete only one side of the form. If both sides should be completed, the supervisor of elections to whom the DS-DE 104 is submitted shall verify only the signature on the English side of the form.

(c) Except for the signature of the voter and date the voter signs the form, the entries on Form DS-DE 104 may be completed prior to the voter signing and dating the form.

(d) A separate petition form is required for each candidate.

(e) The petition form may be included within a larger advertisement, provided the form is clearly defined by a solid or broken border.

(4) Submission of Petition. Each petition must be submitted before noon of the 28th day preceding the first day of the qualifying period for the office sought to the supervisor of elections of the county in which the signee is registered to vote. It is the responsibility of the candidate to ensure that the signed petition form is properly filed with, or if misfiled, forwarded to the supervisor of elections of the county in which the signee is a registered voter. In the case of a misfiled petition, the filing date of the petition is the date such petition is filed with the proper county.

(5) Verification of Signatures.

(a) Upon receipt of candidate petition forms and payment of applicable signature verification fees, the supervisor of elections shall verify the signatures on each petition form to ensure that each person signing the petition form is a registered voter in the county, district, or other geographical area represented by the office sought.

(b) Except for special district candidates who have not collected contributions and whose only expense is the signature verification fee and federal candidates, the supervisor of elections shall also verify that the date the voter signed the petition form is on or after the date the candidate filed the appointment of campaign treasurer and designation of campaign depository pursuant to Section 106.021, F.S., with the appropriate filing officer.

(c) If the candidate is running for an office that requires a group or district designation, the petition must indicate that designation and, if it does not, the signatures are not valid.

(d) No signature on a candidate petition form shall be counted toward the number of signatures required unless it is on the candidate petition form prescribed by the Division in this rule.

(e) A signature on a candidate petition form shall not be counted toward the number of signatures required if the voter has previously signed a candidate petition form for the same candidate for the same office in the same election that had been verified as valid.

(f) In addition to the above requirements, the supervisor of elections shall not verify as valid signature on a candidate petition form unless all of the following information is contained on the petition form:

1. The voter's name;
2. The voter's street address (including city and county);
3. The voter's date of birth (to include the month, day, and year) that matches the date of birth on the voter's registration application or complete voter registration number;

4. The voter's original signature; and

5. The date the voter signed the petition (to include the month, day, and year) as recorded by the voter.

(g) A name on a petition, which name is not in substantially the same form as a name on the voter registration books, shall be counted as a valid signature if, after comparing the signature on the petition with the signature of the alleged signer as shown on the registration books, the supervisor determines that the person signing the petition and the person who registered to vote are one and the same.

(h) If a voter signs a petition and lists an address other than the legal residence where the voter is registered, the supervisor shall treat the signature as if the voter had listed the address where the voter is registered.

(6) Determination of Required Number of Signatures.

(a) No later than 5:00 p.m. on the 7th day before the first day of the qualifying period, the supervisor of elections shall submit to the Division of Elections a certificate indicating the number of valid signatures for each candidate for federal, state, multicounty district, or multicounty special district office. Certificates may be submitted to the Division via facsimile or e-mail in order to meet the deadline, followed by an original copy by mail. The Division shall determine whether the required number of signatures has been obtained and shall notify the candidate.

(b) For candidates for county, district or special district office not covered by paragraph (a). The supervisor shall determine whether the required number of signatures has been obtained and shall notify the candidate.

(c) If the required number of signatures has been obtained, the candidate is eligible to qualify pursuant to Section 99.061 or 105.031, F.S., as applicable.

(7) Effect on Previously Approved Candidate Petition Form. Any candidate petition form which contains the substantive requirements of subsections (3) and (5) and which was approved by the Division of Elections prior to the effective date of this rule may continue to be used and circulated for signature gathering until July 1, 2012.

Rulemaking Authority 20.10(3), 97.012(1), 99.095, 105.035(2) FS. Law Implemented 99.095, 99.061, 99.097, 105.031, 105.035 FS. History—New 10-23-07, Amended 11-7-10.