

North Carolina State Board of Elections

2020 Fact Sheet for Candidate Petition in Lieu of a Filing Fee

A qualified voter who seeks to be a candidate in any **party primary, or nonpartisan primary or nonpartisan election** may avoid paying a filing fee by filing a written petition with the appropriate board of elections.¹

To initiate this process, please obtain a [petition request form](#), fill out the requested information and submit it to this agency at petition.sboe@ncsbe.gov.

Please note the different requirements that apply to the contests for which this process is applicable. For example, for statewide or multi-county contests, there will be **two deadlines** for the petitioner to meet.

- A. Petition in lieu of a filing fee while seeking nomination in the party primary for **United States Senator, Governor, Lieutenant Governor, any State executive officer, Supreme Court justice, Court of Appeals judge (statewide contests)**.²
- The petitioner must be a qualified voter affiliated with the political party in whose primary the candidates desires to run.
 - The petition must be signed by 10,000 registered voters who are members of the political party in whose primary the candidate wishes to run.³
 - The signature pages for this petition must be separated according to the county of the signers. Each of these signature pages must be verified by the county board of elections where each signer is registered.
 - The signature pages must be presented to the appropriate county boards of election (those counties where the signers are registered), no later than **Monday, December 2, 2019**.⁴
 - The petition (comprising all verified signature pages) must be submitted by the petitioner to the State Board before noon on **Dec 16, 2019** (the Monday preceding the filing deadline before the primary).

¹ Petition in lieu of payment of filing fee [prev. § 163-107.1]; text currently available online at [§ 163A-980](#).

² See requirements for these offices [prev. § 163-107.1(b)]; text currently available online at [§ 163A-980\(b\)](#).

³ Except in the case of a new political party as defined in G.S. § 163A-950(a)(2) which will be making nominations by primary election, the petition must be signed by 5% of the registered voters of the State who are affiliated with the same political party in whose primary the candidate desires to run, or in the alternative the petition shall be signed by no less than 8,000 registered voters regardless of the voter's political party affiliation, whichever requirement is greater.

⁴ The statute directs that this date is "15 days prior to the date the petition is due to be filed with the State Board of Elections." Because in 2019, the 15th day falls on a Sunday the due date will be the next business day, Monday, December 2, 2019.

- B. Petition in lieu of a filing fee while seeking nomination in the party primary for **United States House of Representatives; District attorney; judge of the superior court, judge of the district court** and members of the **State house of Representatives from multi-county districts**; or **State Senate from multi-county districts**.⁵
- The petitioner must be a qualified voter affiliated with the political party in whose primary the candidate desires to run.
 - The petition must be signed by whichever of the following is the greater number:
 - o 5% of the registered voters in the election area in which the office will be voted for, who are affiliated with the same political party in whose primary the candidate desires to run, or
 - o 200 registered voters regardless of the voter's political party affiliation.
 - The signature pages for this petition must be separated according to the county of the signers. Each of these signature pages must be verified by the county board of elections where each signer is registered.
 - The signature pages must be presented to the appropriate county boards of election (those counties where the signers are registered), no later than **Monday, December 2, 2019**.⁶ The purpose of this deadline is to enable county board of elections staff to verify the signatures of voters from that county before returning the signature pages to the petitioner.
 - The petition (comprising all verified signature pages) must be submitted by the petitioner to the State Board before noon on **December 16, 2019** (the Monday preceding the filing deadline before the primary).
- C. Petition in lieu of a filing fee while seeking nomination through primary for **county and municipal offices**, or for a **State House** or **State Senate** seat in a **district that is contained within a single county**.⁷
- The petitioner must be a qualified voter affiliated with the political party in whose primary the candidate desires to run.
 - The petition must be signed by whichever of the following is the greater number:
 - o 5% of the registered voters in the election area in which the office will be voted for, who are affiliated with the same political party in whose primary the candidate desires to run, or
 - o 200 registered voters regardless of the voter's political party affiliation.

⁵ See requirements for these offices [prev. § 163-107.1(c)]; text currently available online at [§ 163A-980\(c\)](#).

⁶ The statute directs that this date is “15 days prior to the date the petition is due to be filed with the State Board of Elections.” Because in 2019, the 15th day falls on a Saturday, the due date will be the next business day, Monday, December 2, 2019.

⁷ See requirements for these offices [prev. § 163-107.1(c)]; text currently available online at [§ 163A-980\(c\)](#).

- The petition must be submitted to the State Board before noon on **December 16, 2019** (the Monday preceding the filing deadline before the primary).
- D. Petition in lieu of a filing fee while seeking office through **nonpartisan primaries and elections**.⁸ Offices that fall within this category in 2020 include some school board contests, Soil and Water Conservation District Supervisor, and certain town council members and mayor.

Some school board contests are partisan and others are nonpartisan. Please check with your local board of elections to determine whether the school board in a given locale is partisan or nonpartisan. School board districts are also subject to change, so interested persons should check school district boundaries with local county boards before initiating a petition process.

Elected members or “supervisors” of the NC Soil and Water Conservation Districts seek their seats on a nonpartisan basis during regular elections of county officers.

The requirements include:

- The petitioner must be a qualified voter of the election area
- The petition must be signed by 5% of the qualified, registered voters in the election area in which the office will be voted for.
- The signature pages must be verified by the county board of elections where each signer is registered.
- The signature pages must be presented to the appropriate county board no later than 60 days prior to the filing deadline for the primary or election.

For **2020**, the filing deadline for **most** offices for the primary/election is noon on **December 20, 2019**. The deadline by which signature pages must be submitted to the appropriate board of elections is **Monday, October 21, 2019**.

Note: Filing for Soil & Water Conservation District Supervisor is from noon on June 8, 2020 to noon on July 6, 2020.⁹

Please check with your county board of elections to verify filing dates for school boards and nonpartisan town council contests.

⁸ See requirements for these offices [prev. § 163-107.1(d)]; text currently available online at [§ 163A-980\(d\)](#).

⁹ The statute directs that filing shall end at noon on the first Friday in July preceding the election. In 2020, that date, July 3, 2020, is a state holiday. Therefore, the filing period will conclude at noon on Monday, July 6, 2020.