

FAQ for Candidates — 2016

From the Clallam County Elections Department

This guide is published by the Auditor's Office for candidates planning to run for elective office. We hope that it will answer the most frequently asked questions. Please visit our website at www.clallam.net/elections or call our staff at (360) 417-2217 if you need more information.

Q: How do I become a candidate for office?

A: To file for office, you can come to the Auditor's Office and file on our computer kiosk during filing week. If you are not able to come in, you can file online or by mail. (See below for more information on each option.) State and federal elected offices must file with the Office of the Secretary of State.

Q: What are the qualifications for being a candidate?

A: Basic qualifications for most offices are simple. The candidate must be a registered voter currently residing in the jurisdiction in which he/she wishes to be elected. Candidates for City Council must have been a resident of the city for a period of at least one year next preceding his or her election. (RCW 35A.12.030)

Q: When do I file as a candidate?

A: The "in-person" filing period begins on Monday, May 16, 2016, at 8:00 a.m. and continues each day during regular courthouse business hours until 4:30 p.m. Friday, May 20, 2016. In addition, filings will be accepted by mail if **received** no sooner than two weeks before the beginning of the filing period and no later than the last day of filing. The first day to receive by mail is May 2, 2016. Online filing begins on Monday, May 16 at **9:00 a.m.** and remains open around-the-clock until Friday, May 20 at **4:00 p.m.**

Q: How do I file by mail?

A: Visit our website at www.clallam.net/elections and print a Declaration of Candidacy. Follow the instructions to complete the form and make sure you remember to sign it. If there is a filing fee, that fee must accompany the Declaration of Candidacy in order for your filing to be valid. Please do not send cash through the mail.

Make checks payable to: Clallam County Auditor*

Mail the completed form to:

Clallam County Elections, 223 E. 4th St., Suite 1, Port Angeles, WA 98362

*Candidates for Port Angeles or Sequim City Councils should make checks out to the appropriate city.

Q: How do I file online?

A: Go to www.clallam.net/elections and follow the links for online candidate filing. From there, the procedure is identical to in-person filing using the computer kiosk. Unfortunately, at this time we are unable to accept online payment for filing fees. If you file online you will need to mail a payment check or bring payment to the Auditor's Office. Your full payment must **arrive** at the Auditor's Office by 4:30 p.m. on Friday, May 20, in order for your candidate filing to be completed. Failure to pay by the deadline will result in cancellation of your candidate filing.

Q: What if I mail my form in plenty of time and it is not received until after the end of the filing period?

A: Court cases have ruled that to be valid, a filing must be received by the County Elections Department before the end of the filing period, regardless of circumstances, such as slow or wrong delivery or loss by the post office. If you mail your filing document, it is a good idea to call the Elections Department at (360) 417-2217 to make sure it was received. If you include an email address on your Declaration, a notification will be sent to you as soon as your filing has been processed.

Q: Can someone else file my Declaration of Candidacy for me?

A: Anyone may file your Declaration of Candidacy for you. However, remember that if a friend or associate is given the document and then forgets to file it before the end of the filing period, you are not a candidate. If you do not bring the Declaration in yourself, be sure you signed your Declaration and that the filing fee, if any, is included.

Q: What happens during the week of filing when the Declaration of Candidacy form is submitted?

A: Office hours for filing are 8:00 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. No filings may be made except during those hours. The doors of the Auditor's Office will be unlocked at 8:00 a.m. and promptly locked at 4:30 p.m. Declarations will be taken on a first-come, first-served basis during the day. The Declaration will be checked for completeness. If the form is not complete, we will ask the candidate to complete the form. **Be sure to write the position or district number of the open position.** There will be lists available, which will give the positions subject to election, as given to us by the jurisdictions. The elections staff will verify that the information given is the same as that appearing in our registration files. A list of all candidates who have filed will be available on our website at www.clallam.net/elections.

Q: What is the fee to file for office?

A: The fee is 1% of the annual salary. If there is an annual salary of less than \$1,000, the filing fee is \$10.00. Refer to our website at www.clallam.net/elections for a list of offices open for filing, filing fees, and length of term. If you are uncertain, please call the district involved or the Elections Department at (360) 417-2217.

Q: What if I want to be a candidate but cannot afford to pay a filing fee?

A: State law provides that a candidate who lacks sufficient assets or income at the time of filing to pay the filing fee shall submit with his or her Declaration of Candidacy a *Filing Fee Petition*. The petition shall contain at least one valid signature per dollar of the filing fee. If the signatures are valid, the petition will take the place of the filing fee. (RCW 29A.24.091)

Q: What is a "valid signature" in the context of the *Filing Fee Petition*?

A: A valid signature is one belonging to a voter registered in the jurisdiction in which the candidate wishes to file for office. For example, if you want to run for Port Angeles City Council, only voters registered in the city of Port Angeles may sign your petition.

Q: Where do I get the *Filing Fee Petition* pages?

A: The form is available on our website at www.clallam.net/elections. The Elections Department also has this form available. One page will be given to a candidate; copying must be done at the candidate's expense.

Q: When do I turn in the signature petition?

A: The *Filing Fee Petition* pages must be presented when you file your Declaration of Candidacy during the week of filing. The Declaration will be accepted provisionally. That is, if there are not sufficient valid signatures, the filing will not be accepted and your name will not be placed on the ballot. If you submit your filing and petition pages on the first day of filing, we will attempt to check the signatures within 48 hours. The candidate cannot supplement the signatures at a later date. (WAC 434-215-025)

Q: What if I am not able to get enough valid signatures? May I use cash to make up the difference?

A: No. The filing fee must be either all money or all signatures. State law makes no provision for a combination of both.

Q: What happens if I decide to run for a position different from the one for which I filed?

A: Come to the Auditor's Office during (and before the closing of) the filing period and complete a Withdrawal of Candidacy form for the position for which you no longer wish to run. Then file another Declaration of Candidacy form for the position for which you want to run. **You must pay the new filing fee.** The previous filing fee may not be transferred to another position, **nor is it refundable.**

Q: What if I decide I do not want to run for office after I file?

A: By state law, a candidate may withdraw his or her Declaration of Candidacy at any time **before the close of business on the Monday following the last day for**

candidates to file under RCW 29A.24.050 by filing, with the officer with whom the Declaration of Candidacy was filed, a signed request that his or her name not be printed on the ballot. There shall be no withdrawal period for Declarations of Candidacy filed during special filing periods held under this title. No filing fee may be refunded to any candidate who withdraws under this section. Notice of the deadline for withdrawal of candidacy and that the filing fee is not refundable shall be given to each candidate at the time he or she files. If you are too late to make an official withdrawal, you should still inform your opponents and the PDC, and do a press release to inform the media that you are no longer seeking the office. (RCW 29A.24.131)

Q: What if no one files for one of the offices subject to election?

A: With the exception of PCO, a void in partisan or nonpartisan office occurring before the Primary Election requires the opening of a special three-day filing period. The media must be notified and the special filing period must be posted online. This special three-day filing period will normally occur during the week after the last day to file for office. No candidate who files during a special three-day filing period may withdraw. The race will appear only on the **General Election** ballot. This is true no matter how many candidates file for the office. (RCW 29A.24.181)

Q: When do Public Disclosure laws consider me a candidate?

A: According to state Public Disclosure law, a person becomes a candidate when one of the following events occurs: the candidate publicly announces their candidacy, begins collecting or spending money for a campaign, contracts for campaign goods or services, or officially files for office during filing week.

Q: What are the Public Disclosure requirements?

A: Public Disclosure requirements will vary according to the size of the jurisdiction in which you are a candidate and the amount of money that you plan to spend. If you are a candidate for a jurisdiction with fewer than 1,000 registered voters as of last year's General Election and you do not expect to receive contributions totaling \$5,000 or more, there are no PDC filing requirements. If you are a candidate for a jurisdiction with 1,000 or more, but fewer than 5,000 registered voters as of last year's General Election and you do not expect to receive contributions totaling \$5,000 or more, only the Personal Financial Affairs Statement (F-1) will be necessary. If you are a candidate for a jurisdiction with more than 5,000 registered voters as of last year's General Election and/or you expect to receive contributions totaling \$5,000 or more, both the Candidate Registration (C-1) and the F-1 are required.

Q: Where do I get the PDC forms? What if I need help in filling out the forms?

A: PDC forms may be obtained from the PDC website at www.pdc.wa.gov. The PDC website also offers online filing. There is no charge to file the completed documents. If you need help in filling out the PDC forms, we suggest you call the PDC in Olympia. The Elections Department is not allowed to provide assistance with PDC forms. The PDC phone number is 1-360-753-1111 or toll-free 1-877-601-2828. State law requires

all candidates and political committees that expended \$5,000 or more in 2015, or plan to spend \$5,000 or more during 2016, to file their 2016 reports by electronic means (RCW 42.17A.240). See the PDC website for more details: www.pdc.wa.gov

Q: Will a Voters' Pamphlet be published for the elections?

A: There will be an Online Voters' Guide, available on our website, for both the Primary and General Elections this year. There will also be a printed local Voters' Pamphlet for the General Election. The local Voters' Pamphlet, produced in conjunction with the Office of the Secretary of State, will be printed and distributed in combination with the Washington State General Election Voters' Pamphlet prior to the General Election.

Q: What must I do to get my photo, biography and statement in the Online Voters' Guide and the printed local Voters' Pamphlet?

A: You will be informed of this at the time of filing. Once your filing is processed, you will receive an email that will take you to a website to enter your candidate photo, biography and statement online. It will also provide information about photo specifications and the accepted format and length of your candidate biography and statement. We strongly recommend that you first edit your statement and biography in a word processing application, then copy the text into the online text boxes that are provided. Your text will be presented exactly as you have submitted it—we do not edit for grammar or spelling errors.

Q: What kinds of information or services can the Elections Department provide for candidates?

A: The Elections Department can provide the following information:

Information or services provided free include:

- Voter registration materials
- Candidate information via our website: www.clallam.net/elections
- Access to various information regarding past elections

Information or services with possible cost include:

- Maps of individual precincts (free via our website)
- Lists of registered voters by districts or precincts (free if emailed)
- Lists of voters who have returned their voted ballot (free if emailed)
- Results of past elections (free via our website, under "Archived Elections")

Additional information regarding candidate filing procedures can be found under the "Information for Candidates" tab on our website at www.clallam.net/elections.