

2025 Ballot Access Checklist:

Municipalities Where Nomination Papers are Used



Each of the following forms must be completed and filed on time by a candidate for municipal office in order for the candidate's name to be placed on the ballot at the **February 18, 2025 Spring Primary** and the **April 1, 2025 Spring Election**.

In the City of Milwaukee, the filing officer is the Milwaukee City Election Commission. In all other municipalities, the filing officer is the municipal clerk (town, village or city). Candidates should contact their filing officer for further information or to obtain any of the necessary forms.

- ☐ **Complete and Submit a Registration Statement (Form CF-1)** to the filing officer prior to raising or spending any funds, and no later than **5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, January 7, 2025** or the candidate's name will not be placed on the ballot. If the form is faxed or emailed, the original document must follow postmarked no later than January 7, 2025. Wis. Stat. §§ 8.10(5), 8.30(2), Wis. Admin. Code EL § 6.04.
 - **New Candidates**
File a campaign registration statement before campaign funds are collected or spent or before submitting nomination papers. Wis. Stat. §§ 11.0202(1)(a), 11.0101(1).
 - **Continuing Candidates**
Amend your current registration, indicating the office sought and the new primary and election dates. Wis. Stat. §§ 11.0202(1)(a), 11.0101(1).
- ☐ **Complete and Submit a Declaration of Candidacy (Form EL-162)** to the filing officer no later than **5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, January 7, 2025** or the candidate's name will not be placed on the ballot. If the form is faxed or emailed, the original document must follow, postmarked no later than January 7, 2025. Wis. Stat. §§ 8.10(5), 8.21, 8.30(4), Wis. Admin. Code EL § 6.04.
- ☐ **Circulate and Submit Nomination Papers for Nonpartisan Office (Form EL-169)** to the filing officer no later than **5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, January 7, 2025** or the candidate's name will not be placed on the ballot. Only original nomination papers (no photocopies, faxes, or emailed documents) will be accepted. Nomination papers may not be circulated before December 1, 2024. Wis. Stat. § 8.10(2), Wis. Admin. Code EL § 6.04(2).

The number of signatures required is as follows:

All village and town offices:		20 - 100
1 st Class Cities:	Citywide offices	1,500 - 3,000
	Aldersperson elected to district	200 - 400
2 nd and 3 rd Class Cities:	Citywide offices	200 - 400
	Aldersperson elected at large	100 - 200
	Aldersperson elected to district	20 - 40
4 th Class Cities:	Citywide offices	50 - 100
	Aldersperson elected to district	20 - 40

- ☐ **Municipal Judge Candidates:**
Complete and submit a Statement of Economic Interests (SEI) to the Ethics Commission using the website (<https://sei.wi.gov>). Incumbent candidates will receive a filing notice around December 1, 2024, and new candidates will receive an email notice within one or two days of registering their committee. The SEI must be received no later than 4:30 p.m. on Friday, January 10, 2025, or the candidate's name will not appear on the ballot. Wis. Stat. §§ 8.10(5), 8.30(3), 19.43(4). Candidates may also print the SEI form and instructions from the Ethics Commission website (<https://ethics.wi.gov>), and return those forms by email or fax. For more information, please contact the Ethics Commission at 608-266-8123 or ethics@wi.gov.

Important Note Regarding Statements of Economic Interests:

A municipality may enact an ordinance establishing a code of ethics for public officials that may require a candidate for municipal office, *in addition to the office of Municipal Judge*, to file a **Statement of Economic Interests (SEI)**. The ordinance may also provide that failure to timely file an SEI will prevent the candidate's name from being placed on the ballot. Wis. Stat. § 19.59(1m),(3)(b). Please contact the filing officer to learn if this requirement applies to you.

Declaration of Candidacy

(See instructions for preparation on back)

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Is this an amendment?

☐ **Yes** (if you have already filed a DOC for this election)

☐ **No** (if this is the first DOC you have filed for this election)

I, _____, being duly sworn, state that

Candidate's name

I am a candidate for the office of _____

Official name of office - Include district, branch or seat number

representing _____

If partisan election, name of political party or statement of principle - five words or less (Candidates for nonpartisan office may leave blank.)

and I meet or will meet at the time I assume office the applicable age, citizenship, residency and voting qualification requirements, if any, prescribed by the constitutions and laws of the United States and the State of Wisconsin, and that I will otherwise qualify for office, if nominated and elected.

I have not been convicted of a felony in any court within the United States for which I have not been pardoned.¹

My present address, including my municipality of residence for voting purposes is:

				Town of <input type="checkbox"/>	
				Village of <input type="checkbox"/>	
				City of <input type="checkbox"/>	

House or fire no.

Street Name

Mailing Municipality and State

Zip code

Municipality of Residence for Voting

My name as I wish it to appear on the official ballot is as follows:

(Any combination of first name, middle name or initials with surname. A nickname may replace a legal name.)

STATE OF WISCONSIN

County of _____

(County where oath administered)

}

ss.

(Signature of candidate)

Subscribed and sworn to before me this _____ day of _____, _____.

(Signature of person authorized to administer oaths)

**NOTARY SEAL
REQUIRED, IF OATH
ADMINISTERED BY
NOTARY PUBLIC**

☐ Notary Public or ☐ other official _____

(Official title, if not a notary)

If Notary Public: My commission expires _____ or ☐ is permanent.

The information on this form is required by Wis. Stat. § 8.21, Art. XIII, Sec. 3, Wis. Const., and must be filed with the filing officer in order to have a candidate's name placed on the ballot. Wis. Stats. §§ 8.05 (1)(j), 8.10 (5), 8.15 (4)(b), 8.20 (6), 120.06 (6)(b), 887.01.

EL-162 | Rev. 2019-08 | Wisconsin Elections Commission, P.O. Box 7984, Madison, WI 53707-7984
608-266-8005 | web: elections.wi.gov | email: elections@wi.gov

¹ A 1996 constitutional amendment bars any candidate convicted of a misdemeanor which violates the public trust from running for or holding a public office. However, the legislature has not defined which misdemeanors violate the public trust. A candidate convicted of any misdemeanor is not barred from running for or holding a public office until the legislature defines which misdemeanors apply.

Instructions for Completing the Declaration of Candidacy

All candidates seeking ballot status for election to any office in the State of Wisconsin must properly complete and file a **Declaration of Candidacy**. This form must be **ON FILE** with the proper filing officer no later than the deadline for filing nomination papers or the candidate's name will not appear on the ballot. A facsimile will be accepted if the FAX copy is received by the filing officer no later than the filing deadline **and** the signed original declaration is received by the filing officer with a postmark no later than the filing deadline.

Information to be provided by the candidate:

- Type or print your name on the first line.
- The title of the office and **any district, branch, or seat number** for which you are seeking election must be inserted on the second line. *For legislative offices insert the title and district number, for district attorneys insert the title and the county, for circuit court offices insert the title, county and branch number, and for municipal and school board offices insert the title and any district or seat number.*
- Type or print the political party affiliation or principle supported by you in five words or less on the third line. *Nonpartisan candidates may leave this line blank.*
- **Felony convictions: Your name cannot appear on the ballot if you have been convicted of a felony in any court in the United States for which you have not been pardoned. Please see footnote on page 1 for further information with respect to convictions for misdemeanors involving a violation of public trust. These restrictions only apply to candidates for state and local office.**
- Your current address, including your municipality of residence for voting purposes, must be inserted on the fourth line. This must include your entire mailing address (**street and number, municipality where you receive mail**) and the name of the municipality in which you reside and vote (town, village, or city of ____). If your address changes before the election, an amended Declaration of Candidacy must be filed with the filing officer. Wis. Stat. § 8.21. *Federal candidates are not required to provide this information, however an address for contact purposes is helpful.*
- Type or print your name on the fifth line as you want it to be printed on the official ballot. You may use your full legal name, former legal surname, or any combination of first name, middle name, and initials, surname or nickname with last name.

Note: The Wisconsin Elections Commission has determined that, absent any evidence of an attempt to manipulate the electoral process, candidates are permitted to choose any form of their name, including nicknames, by which they want to appear on the ballot.

No titles are permitted. In addition, names such as “Red” or “Skip” are permitted, but names which have an apparent electoral purpose or benefit, such as “Lower taxes,” “None of the above” or “Lower Spending” are not permitted. It is also not permissible to add nicknames in quotes or parentheses. For example, John “Jack” Jones or John (Jack) Jones are not acceptable, but John Jones, Jack Jones or John Jack Jones are acceptable.

This form must be sworn to and signed in the presence of a notary public or other person authorized to administer oaths, such as a county or municipal clerk. Wis. Stat. §§ 8.21(2), 887.01(1).

Information to be provided by the person administering the oath:

- The county where the oath was administered.
- The date the Declaration of Candidacy was signed and the oath administered.
- The signature and title of the person administering the oath. If signed by a notary public, the notary seal is required and the date the notary's commission expires must be listed.

All candidates for offices using the nomination paper process must file this form (*and all school district candidates must file the EL-162sd*) with the appropriate filing officer no later than the deadline for filing nomination papers. Wis. Stats. §§ 8.10 (5), 8.15 (4)(b), 8.20 (6), 8.21, 8.50 (3)(a), 120.06 (6)(b). Candidates nominated for local office at a caucus must file this form with their municipal clerk within 5 days of receiving notice of nomination. Wis. Stat. § 8.05 (l)(j).

NOMINATION PAPER FOR NONPARTISAN OFFICE

Candidate's name (required) ; no titles may be used.		Candidate's residential address (required) <i>No P.O. box addresses</i> Street, fire, or rural route number; box number (if rural route); and name of street or road		Candidate's municipality for <u>voting</u> purposes (required) <input type="checkbox"/> Town <input type="checkbox"/> Village _____ <input type="checkbox"/> City _____ (name of municipality)	
Candidate's mailing address, including municipality for mailing purposes (required) if different than residential address or voting municipality)		WI	State (required)	Zip code	Type of election (required) <input type="checkbox"/> spring <input type="checkbox"/> special
Election date (required) <i>Do not use primary date.</i> <u>Mo/Day/Year</u>		Title of office (required)		Branch, district or seat number (required) if applicable <input type="checkbox"/> Branch <input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Seat	
Name of jurisdiction or district in which candidate seeks office (required)					

I, the undersigned, request that the candidate, whose name and residential address are listed above, be placed on the ballot at the election described above as a candidate so that voters will have the opportunity to vote for ☐ him or ☐ her for the office listed above. I am eligible to vote in the jurisdiction or district in which the candidate named above seeks office. I have not signed the nomination paper of any other candidate for the same office at this election.

The municipality used for mailing purposes, when different than municipality of residence, is not sufficient. The name of the municipality of residence must always be listed.

Signatures of Electors	Printed Name of Electors	Residential Address <i>(No P.O. Box Addresses)</i> Street and Number or Rural Route <small>(Rural address must also include box or fire no.)</small>	Municipality of Residence <small>Check the type and write the name of your municipality for voting purposes.</small>	Date of Signing Mo/Day/Year
1.			<input type="checkbox"/> Town <input type="checkbox"/> Village <input type="checkbox"/> City	
2.			<input type="checkbox"/> Town <input type="checkbox"/> Village <input type="checkbox"/> City	
3.			<input type="checkbox"/> Town <input type="checkbox"/> Village <input type="checkbox"/> City	
4.			<input type="checkbox"/> Town <input type="checkbox"/> Village <input type="checkbox"/> City	
5.			<input type="checkbox"/> Town <input type="checkbox"/> Village <input type="checkbox"/> City	
6.			<input type="checkbox"/> Town <input type="checkbox"/> Village <input type="checkbox"/> City	
7.			<input type="checkbox"/> Town <input type="checkbox"/> Village <input type="checkbox"/> City	
8.			<input type="checkbox"/> Town <input type="checkbox"/> Village <input type="checkbox"/> City	
9.			<input type="checkbox"/> Town <input type="checkbox"/> Village <input type="checkbox"/> City	
10.			<input type="checkbox"/> Town <input type="checkbox"/> Village <input type="checkbox"/> City	

CERTIFICATION OF CIRCULATOR

I, _____ certify: I reside at _____.

(Name of circulator) (Circulator's residential address - Include number, street, and municipality.)

I further certify I am either a qualified elector of Wisconsin, or a U.S. citizen, age 18 or older who, if I were a resident of this state, would not be disqualified from voting under Wis. Stat. §6.03. I personally circulated this nomination paper and personally obtained each of the signatures on this paper. I know that the signers are electors of the jurisdiction or district the candidate seeks to represent. I know that each person signed the paper with full knowledge of its content on the date indicated opposite his or her name. I know their respective residences given. I intend to support this candidate. I am aware that falsifying this certification is punishable under Wis. Stat. § 12.13(3)(a).

(Date) (Signature of circulator)

Page No.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR PREPARING NOMINATION PAPERS FOR NONPARTISAN OFFICE

This is a sample nomination paper form. It conforms to the statutory requirements for nomination papers for nonpartisan office. All information concerning the candidate must be completed in full before circulating this form to obtain signatures of electors. All information concerning the signing electors and the circulator must be completed in full before filing with the appropriate filing officer. This form may be reproduced in any way. A candidate's picture and biographical data may also be added to this form. The Wisconsin Elections Commission has determined that no disclaimer or other attribution statement is required on nomination papers. Candidates are advised to send a sample of their completed form the filing officer for review before circulation.

Page Numbers – Number each page consecutively, beginning with “1”, before submitting to the filing officer. A space for page numbers has been provided in the lower right-hand corner of the form.

Candidate's Name - Insert the candidate's name. A candidate may use his or her full legal name, or any combination of first name, middle name, and initials or nickname with last name. The Wisconsin Elections Commission has determined that, absent any evidence of an attempt to manipulate the electoral process, candidates are permitted to choose any form of their name, including nicknames, by which they want to appear on the ballot.

No titles are permitted. In addition, names such as “Red” or “Skip” are permitted, but names which have an apparent electoral purpose or benefit, such as “Lower taxes,” “None of the above” or “Lower Spending” are not permitted. It is also not permissible to add nicknames in quotes or parentheses between first and last names. For example, John “Jack” Jones or John (Jack) Jones are not acceptable, but John Jones, Jack Jones or John Jack Jones are acceptable.

Candidate's Address – Insert the candidate's residential address (*no P.O. Box addresses*) and the municipality for voting purposes. Indicate if the municipality of residence is a town, village, or city. If a candidate's mailing address is different from the residential address or voting municipality, a complete mailing address must also be given.

Date of Election - Insert the date of the election. If the nomination paper is being circulated for a spring election, the date is the first Tuesday in April. If the election is a special nonpartisan election, the date of the special election must be listed.

Title of Office - The name of the office must be listed **along with any branch, district, or seat number** (if applicable) that clearly identifies the office the candidate is seeking. If necessary, the name of the jurisdiction that identifies the office, such as Dane County Circuit Court Judge, Branch 3, must also be listed.

Name of Jurisdiction - The nomination papers must also indicate the municipality or jurisdiction in which the signing electors are qualified to vote, as it relates to the office sought by the candidate named on the nomination paper. For example, for a statewide office the jurisdiction is the State of Wisconsin. Others may be the county, town, village, city, aldermanic district, school district, or town sanitary district, as required.

Signatures and Printed Name of Electors - Only qualified electors of the jurisdiction or the district the candidate seeks to represent may sign the nomination papers. Each signer must also legibly print their name. Each elector must provide their **residential** address (*no P.O. Box addresses*), including any street, fire or rural route number, box number (if rural route) and street or road name, and municipality of residence. A post office box number alone does not show where the elector actually resides. The name of the Municipality of Residence must be listed for each signing elector and must clearly identify the town, village or city where the elector's voting residence is located. The date the elector signed the nomination paper, including month, day and year, must be indicated. Ditto marks that follow correct and complete address or date information are acceptable. The circulator may add any missing or illegible address or date information before the papers are filed with the filing officer.

Signature of Circulator - The circulator should carefully read the language of the *Certification of Circulator*. **THE CIRCULATOR MUST PERSONALLY PRESENT THE NOMINATION PAPER TO EACH SIGNER. THE NOMINATION PAPER MAY NOT BE LEFT UNATTENDED ON COUNTERS OR POSTED ON BULLETIN BOARDS.** The circulator's complete residential address including municipality of residence must be listed in the certification. **After** obtaining signatures of electors, the circulator must sign and date the certification.

Other Instructions - Candidates and circulators should review Ch. Wisconsin Elections Commission §§ 2.05, 2.07, Wis. Adm. Code.

- *Original* nomination papers must be in the physical custody of the appropriate filing officer by the filing deadline. A postmark on the filing deadline is **NOT** sufficient. Nomination papers **CANNOT** be faxed to the filing officer. Ch. Wisconsin Elections Commission § 6.04(2), Wis. Adm. Code.
- Nomination papers with the required number of signatures must be filed with the appropriate filing officer **no later than 5:00 p.m.** on the first Tuesday in January (or the next day if the first Tuesday is a holiday) before the spring election. Special elections may have different filing deadlines. Check with the filing officer.
- In order for a candidate's name to be placed on the ballot, a candidate must file a *Campaign Registration Statement* (ETHCF-1), a *Declaration of Candidacy* (EL-162), and *Nomination Papers* (EL-169) containing the appropriate number of signatures for the office sought no later than the filing deadline. Wis. Stat. § 8.10(3). Candidates for state office and municipal judge must also file a statement of economic interests with the Wisconsin Ethics Commission by the third business day after the nomination paper filing deadline. Wis. Stat. § 19.43. If any one of these required forms is not filed by the deadline, the candidate's name will not be placed on the ballot. Wis. Stat. § 8.30.
- If a candidate or circulator has any questions, he or she should contact the filing officer.



CAMPAIGN FINANCE REGISTRATION STATEMENT —
LOCAL CANDIDATE COMMITTEE
STATE OF WISCONSIN

***CAUTION:** A personal telephone number that is identified as a confidential telephone number on page 3 of this form should **not** be entered on page 1 of this form. Do **not** enter any personal telephone numbers of the candidate, the candidate committee treasurer, and any other custodian of books and accounts on page 1 of this form.

1. Is this an Amendment? ☐ No ☐ Yes

SECTION A: GENERAL INFORMATION

A1. Committee Name (Required for all Candidates - must be included in disclaimer on all communications)				
A2. Committee Email		A3. Committee Phone (Do not enter a confidential phone number)		
A4. Mailing Address		A5. City	A6. State	A7. Zip
Depository Institution Information				
A8. Institution Name	A9. Street Address	A10. City	A11. State	A12. Zip
Treasurer/Administrator Information				
A13. Name		A14. Treasurer Email	A15. Treasurer Phone (*See Caution)	
A16. Mailing Address		A17. City	A18. State	A19. Zip
Other Officers (Optional)				
A20. Name	A21. Title	A22. Email	A23. Phone (* See Caution above)	
A24. Name	A25. Title	A26. Email	A27. Phone (* See Caution above)	
Filing Exemption <i>Registrants which do not anticipate accepting or making contributions, making disbursements, or incurring obligations in an aggregate amount exceeding \$2,500 in a calendar year may claim an exemption from filing campaign finance reports. This exemption applies until the registrant exceeds the \$2,500 aggregate activity threshold, amends its registration, or is terminated.</i>			A28. Exemption Affirmation <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, this registrant is eligible for exemption. <input type="checkbox"/> No, this registrant is not eligible for exemption.	

SECTION B: CANDIDATE INFORMATION

B1. Office Sought (include District/Branch)		B2. Political Party	B3. Election Date
Candidate Information			
B4. Name		B5. Candidate Email	B6. Candidate Phone (* See Caution)
B7. Mailing Address		B8. City	B9. State B10. Zip
Second Candidate Committee <i>An individual who holds a state or local elective office may establish a second candidate committee to pursue another state or local office.</i>		B11. Is this your only registered candidate committee in Wisconsin? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, this is my only candidate committee in Wisconsin. <input type="checkbox"/> No, this is my second candidate committee in Wisconsin.	
B12. Other Office Held or Sought (include District/Branch) Only complete B12 if you responded "No" to B11.			

SECTION C: CERTIFICATION

Accurate Information

- ☐ I certify that I am an authorized representative of the candidate committee and that to my knowledge all of the information contained within this registration is true, correct, and complete.

Timely Amendments

- ☐ I am aware of the requirement to amend this registration statement within 10 days of any change of information contained within, including any change to the candidate committee's eligibility for exemption from campaign finance reporting.

Records Retention

- ☐ I acknowledge the requirement to maintain the records of the candidate committee in an organized and legible manner for three years from the close of the most recent contribution limit period (June 30 following the April election, December 31 following the November election).

Continuing Compliance

- ☐ I acknowledge that I am required to continue to comply with all applicable requirements under Chapter 11 of the Wisconsin Statutes until this registration is terminated. I understand that I am not released from any liability simply because the election date has passed.

Treasurer

C1. Printed Name	C2. Signature	C3. Date

Candidate

C4. Printed Name	C5. Signature	C6. Date

Form Instructions

Candidates must complete all sections A, B, and C.

Item 1. Is this an amendment? Have you registered with this local clerk to run for office in a prior election?

Item A1: Committee Name. All candidates are required to register a committee. It is not required that the name include the candidate's name, but it is recommended. This committee name is required to be part of the disclaimer on all communications with express advocacy: 'Paid for by ...'

A28: Exemption. Candidates claiming exemption may not have more than \$2,500 of activity, in the aggregate per year. In a calendar year, if you raise \$1,600 and spend \$1,000 you have \$2,600 of aggregate activity and are not eligible to claim exemption.

Depository Institution Information. All candidates must designate a depository institution. While it is recommended that all candidates have a designated campaign depository account, candidates who will serve as their own treasurer may designate a single personal account to serve as the committee depository account while claiming a filing exemption and may intermingle personal and campaign funds (Wis. STAT. § 11.0201(2)(b)).

Treasurer Information. Each committee must appoint a treasurer. Any adult may serve as a treasurer. A candidate may serve as his or her own treasurer. If you are serving as your own treasurer, please write "Self" or "Candidate". A candidate serving as their own treasurer does not need to provide their name, address and contact information here because that information will already be provided in section B. Do not leave this section blank.

Section B: Candidate Information

B1. Be sure to include the name of the county, municipality, or school district. There are 72 counties with county supervisors, 100's of school boards, and 1000's of municipal boards.

B2. Party - "N/A" or "None" for nonpartisan offices (April). Democrat, Republican, Constitution, Green, Independent, or other ballot status party for partisan (fall) primary/election.

Section C: Certification. All candidates must complete section C. If the candidate is serving as their own treasurer, they would only need to sign once, as either the candidate or treasurer.



CAMPAIGN FINANCE REGISTRATION STATEMENT —
LOCAL CANDIDATE COMMITTEE—CONFIDENTIAL PHONE CONTACTS
STATE OF WISCONSIN

All information on pages 1 and 2 of this form is available to the public. Pursuant to 2023 Wisconsin Act 120, candidates, treasurers, and any other custodian of books and accounts (such as an assistant treasurer) are required to provide a personal telephone number. This page provides you the space to provide those required telephone numbers. Personal telephone numbers are confidential and are not subject to the right of inspection and copying under WIS. STAT. § 19.35(1). *See* WIS. STAT. § 11.0203(bd). However, a personal email address provided is subject to the right of inspection and copying under WIS. STAT. § 19.35(1) and may be disclosed.

Failure to provide a valid email may result in failure to receive filing reminders and notifications from the filing officer. Failure to receive a form or notice from a filing officer does not exempt a committee from a reporting requirement under this chapter (WIS. STAT. §11.0103(b)). The candidate committee is required to report any change in information previously submitted in a registration statement within 10 days following the change. WIS. STAT. § 11.0203(3).

Candidate Information	
Name	Personal Phone Number

Treasurer Information	
Name	Personal Phone Number

Other Custodians' Information	
Name	Personal Phone Number
Name	Personal Phone Number
Name	Personal Phone Number



Wisconsin Ethics Commission

PO Box 7125

Madison, WI 53707-7125

Phone: (608) 266-8123

Email: campaignfinance@wi.gov

Websites: <https://cfs.wi.gov>
<https://ethics.wi.gov>

CAMPAIGN FINANCE OVERVIEW

Local Candidate Committees

Published: September 2023

This reflects the statutory changes effective January 2023
(2021 Act 265).

This manual has been updated to include specific statutory citations and
clarify basic reporting requirements for
local candidate committees.

Provided pursuant to WIS. STAT. § [11.1304\(3\)](#) and
in compliance with WIS. STAT. § [227.112](#).

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REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

Who is Required to Register?

Under Wisconsin campaign finance law, a candidate for election to public office must register a candidate committee with the appropriate filing officer. A candidate for local office must register with the appropriate filing officer as soon as is practicable after any of the following occur:

- (a) The individual takes any of the following affirmative actions to seek nomination or election to a state or local office:
 - 1. Files nomination papers with the appropriate filing officer;
 - 2. Is nominated as a candidate for state or local office by a caucus or by a political party and the nomination is certified to the appropriate filing officer;
 - 3. Receives a contribution, makes a disbursement, or gives consent for another person to receive a contribution or make a disbursement in order to bring about the individual's nomination or election to a state or local office;
- (b) The individual holds a state or local office and is the subject of a recall petition; or
- (c) The individual holds a state or local office.

WIS. STAT. §§ [11.0101\(1\)](#), [11.0202\(1\)\(a\)](#).

Appropriate filing officers are as follows:

<u>Office:</u>	<u>Filing Officer:</u>
County Executive	County Clerk
County Supervisor	County Clerk
County Clerk or County Treasurer	County Clerk
Clerk of Circuit Court	County Clerk
Coroner	County Clerk
Register of Deeds	County Clerk
Sheriff	County Clerk
Multi-Jurisdictional Judge*	County Clerk
Mayor, Village President	Municipal Clerk
Alderperson, Village Trustee, Town Board Member	Municipal Clerk
Municipal Clerk or Municipal Treasurer [if elected]	Municipal Clerk
Municipal Judge	Municipal Clerk
School District Board Member	School District Clerk

If a multi-jurisdictional judge serves a district with municipalities in more than one county, the filing officer is the County Clerk in the county with the largest population within the district.

[WIS. STAT. § 11.0102\(1\)\(b\)-\(g\)](#).

A candidate who receives no contributions, makes no disbursements, and incurs no obligations need not designate a campaign depository account until the first contribution is received, disbursement is made, or obligation is incurred. [WIS. STAT. § 11.0202\(1\)\(b\)](#). The only activities allowed prior to registration are: the minimum amount of money needed to open an account can be deposited at a financial institution, a

post office box can be rented, and contributions and disbursements needed for the production of nomination papers can be made. [WIS. STAT. § 11.0202\(2\)\(b\)](#).

After filing the registration statement, a candidate may begin receiving and disbursing campaign funds. [WIS. STAT. § 11.0202\(2\)\(a\)](#). The candidate committee's financial activities must be reported to the appropriate filing officer on campaign finance reports, unless the committee has claimed an exemption from filing reports. WIS. STAT. §§ [11.0103](#), [11.0104](#). These reports will disclose information on the receipts, expenditures, incurred obligations, and loans of the campaign. [WIS. STAT. § 11.0204\(1\)](#).

Completing a Registration Statement

Registration statements are to be filed with the appropriate filing officer using the Ethics Commission's Campaign Finance Registration Statement ([CF-1 Local Candidate](#)). [WIS. STAT. § 11.1304\(1\)](#).

Required Information

1. The name and mailing address of the candidate committee.
2. The name and mailing address of the candidate committee treasurer and any other custodian of books and accounts. Unless otherwise directed by the treasurer on the registration form and except as otherwise provided in this chapter or any rule of the commission, all mailings that are required by law or by rule of the commission shall be sent to the treasurer at the treasurer's address indicated upon the form.
3. In the case of a candidate committee of an independent candidate for partisan office or a candidate for nonpartisan county or municipal office, a list of the members of the committee, if any, whom the filing officer shall recognize as eligible to fill a nomination vacancy if the candidate dies before the election.
4. The name and address of the depository account of the candidate committee and of any other institution where funds of the committee are kept.

[WIS. STAT. § 11.0203](#).

Guide for Filing the Campaign Finance Registration Statement (CF-1)

Section A. General Information

This section must be completed by all candidate committees. It contains the information identifying the candidate committee.

A1. Candidate Committee Name

This is the name used for the attribution/disclaimer statements on advertisements and yard signs. Common options include "First Name Last Name for Wisconsin" or "Friends of First Name Last Name."

A2-12. Contact and Depository Institution Information

If the candidate committee does not have a separate address/PO box, phone number, or email for the candidate committee, then the candidate should use their personal address, phone number, and email. Candidates claiming exemption may use a personal bank account as the committee depository account. Candidates not claiming the exemption are required to set up a separate bank account for their committee.

A13-19. Treasurer Information

If the candidate is serving as their own treasurer, they should include their own contact information here.

A20-27. Other Officers

This section is intended to list other individuals that are helping on the campaign and is entirely optional. Local non-partisan candidates can list an individual here with an asterisk by their name which indicates they are to fill a vacancy if the candidate were to pass away before the election.

A28. Exemption

Indicate whether the candidate committee will not accept contributions, make disbursements, or incur obligations in aggregate of more than \$2,500 in a calendar year and therefore is eligible to claim an exemption from filing campaign finance reports. If a committee raises \$1,600 and spends \$1,000, this is \$2,600 of aggregate activity, and it is not eligible to claim exemption.

Section B. Candidate Information

B1-3. Election Information

List the office sought, including the district and branch and the election date. If the race is nonpartisan, then “nonpartisan” or “N/A” can be listed in B2. An amended registration must be filed for every election, listing the correct election date in B3.

B4-10. Candidate Information

This section should list the personal contact information of the candidate.

B11-12. Second Candidate Committee

If the candidate currently holds an elective office and has an additional candidate committee, they should indicate it in this section.

Section C. Certification

Both the candidate and treasurer shall certify the initial registration here with their signatures. If the candidate serves as the treasurer, they only need to sign once, under “Candidate,” in C5. By signing the certification, the candidate and treasurer are certifying each of the following statements listed on the registration:

- I certify that I am an authorized representative of the candidate committee and that to my knowledge all of the information contained within this registration is true, correct, and complete.
- I am aware of the requirement to amend this registration statement within 10 days of any change of information contained within, including any change to the candidate committee’s eligibility for exemption from campaign finance reporting.
 - When any information reported on the registration statement changes, an amendment to the registration statement must be filed with the appropriate filing officer within **ten days**. [WIS. STAT. § 11.0203\(3\)\(a\)](#). The amended registration only requires either the candidate or treasurer to certify.
- I acknowledge requirement to maintain the records of the candidate committee in an organized and legible manner for three years from the close of the most recent contribution limit period (June 30 following the April election, December 31 following the November election).
 - The treasurer must maintain all records from each contribution limit period for 3 years following the end of each period. See the [Records Retention Requirement](#) section in this guide for more information.
- I acknowledge that I am required to continue to comply with all applicable requirements under Chapter 11 of the Wisconsin Statutes until this registration is terminated. I understand that I am not released from any liability simply because the election date has passed.

- A committee remains active until termination is requested pursuant to [WIS. STAT. § 11.0105](#). Even if the election has passed, the committee must continue to file reports and comply with all other requirements until the committee is terminated. [WIS. STAT. § 11.0207](#). See the [TERMINATION OF CAMPAIGN FINANCE REGISTRATION](#) section in this guide for more information on termination.

Candidates Seeking More Than One Office

An individual who holds a state or local elective office may establish a second candidate committee to pursue another state or local office. [WIS. STAT. § 11.0202\(2\)\(d\)](#). If a second committee is established, that committee will register and file reports with the appropriate filing officer. [WIS. STAT. § 11.0102](#).

Failure to File a Registration Statement

Failure to file a registration statement by the deadline for filing nomination papers may prevent a candidate's name from appearing on the ballot. WIS. STAT. §§ [8.15\(4\)\(b\)](#), [8.30\(2\)](#). If a statement or amendment is not filed on time, the registrant may be subject to a civil penalty. [WIS. STAT. § 11.1400\(1\)](#).

EXEMPTION FROM FILING CAMPAIGN FINANCE REPORTS

Eligibility

Committees may be eligible for an exemption from filing campaign finance reports if the committee anticipates that it will not accept or make contributions, make disbursements, or incur loans and other obligations in an aggregate amount exceeding \$2,500 in a calendar year. [WIS. STAT. § 11.0104](#). This includes the candidate's personal funds contributed and spent on campaign expenses. For example, if a committee receives \$1,600 in contributions and spends \$1,000 in disbursements, the committee's aggregate activity is \$2,600, and it would not be eligible for exemption.

A local candidate eligible for exemption may claim exemption at any time. A local candidate claiming exemption can remain on exemption until they exceed the threshold or request termination. [WIS. STAT. § 11.0104\(1\)\(c\)](#).

Financial Records During Exemption

When a committee is exempt, it is not required to file any campaign finance reports until it requests termination. However, the candidate or treasurer is still required to keep financial records of all contributions to the committee and of all expenditures for three years after the end of the contribution limit period. [WIS. STAT. § 11.0201\(4\)](#). See the [Records Retention Requirement](#) section in this guide for more information.

A candidate committee that is exempt from filing campaign finance reports and for which the candidate serves as the treasurer may use a personal account as the campaign depository and intermingle campaign funds with personal and other funds. [WIS. STAT. § 11.0201\(2\)\(b\)](#). While permissible, intermingling funds can cause confusion about whether the funds were received or spent for personal or for campaign purposes. It can also make it more difficult to track contribution limits. Therefore, the best practice is to have a separate account for the candidate committee.

Revoking Exemption

If the committee exceeds the \$2,500 aggregate limit on contributions, disbursements, or obligations, the committee must amend its campaign registration statement by checking in Box A28, "No, this registrant is not eligible for exemption." An amendment to the registration statement must be filed with the appropriate filing officer immediately. [WIS. STAT. § 11.0104\(5\)\(a\)](#). The committee is then required to file campaign finance reports beginning with the next regular report due after the earlier of either the date that the amended registration was filed or the date that the committee exceeded \$2,500 in aggregate contributions, disbursements, or obligations. [WIS. STAT. § 11.0104\(3\)](#).

If an exempt committee receives and accepts a contribution that results in the committee exceeding \$2,500 in aggregate activity, the committee shall do one of the following:

1. Immediately file an amended registration revoking the exemption; or
2. Within 15 days of receiving the contribution, return the contribution to the contributor or donate it to the common school fund or to a charitable organization.
3. If the candidate had been serving as their own treasurer and using a personal account while the committee was on exempt status, the committee must open a separate bank account when exempt status is revoked and transfer all campaign funds in the personal account to the new account.

CONTRIBUTION LIMITS

All candidates running for elected office must abide by contribution limits that vary depending on the office sought and the population of the district.

Receiving Committee	From an Individual	From a Candidate Committee	From a PAC	From a Corporation/ Union
Local Candidate	Greater of \$500 or 2¢ times the population in the district. Not to exceed \$6,000.	Greater of \$500 or 2¢ times the population in the district. Not to exceed \$6,000.	Greater of \$400 or 2¢ times the population in the district. Not to exceed \$5,000.	\$0; Illegal

Districts of 20,000 inhabitants or less have an individual or candidate committee limit of \$500 and a PAC limit of \$400.

Districts with 300,000 inhabitants or more will have an individual or candidate committee limit of \$6,000 and a PAC limit of \$5,000.

Districts with more than 20,000 but less than 300,000 inhabitants will have varying individual and candidate committee limits between \$500 and \$6,000 and PAC limits between \$400 and \$5,000.

WIS. STAT. §§ [11.1101](#), [11.1104](#).

The number of inhabitants in the jurisdiction or district is determined by the latest federal census or the census information on which the district is based, as certified by the appropriate filing officer. [WIS. STAT. § 11.1101\(2\)\(h\)2](#).

Applicable Periods for Contribution Limits

For the purpose of calculating contribution limits, a new candidate's campaign begins on the date she or he becomes a candidate. [WIS. STAT. § 11.1103\(2\)](#). The campaign period includes both the primary and election. For a candidate at the spring election, the contribution limit period ends the June 30th immediately following the spring election. For candidates at the general election, the contribution limit period ends the December 31st immediately following the general election. [WIS. STAT. § 11.1103\(2\)](#).

For an incumbent candidate whose office is elected at the spring election, the new contribution limit period begins on July 1 following the spring election. For an incumbent candidate whose office is elected at the general election, the new contribution limit period begins January 1 following the general election. [WIS. STAT. § 11.1103\(1\)](#). The contribution period runs through the primary and election for the next term of that office. For an incumbent candidate whose office is elected at the spring election, the period ends June 30th following the spring election. For an incumbent candidate whose office is elected at the general election, the contribution limit period ends December 31st following the general election. [WIS. STAT. § 11.1103\(2\)](#)

For a candidate at a special election, the campaign period runs from the date an individual becomes a candidate through the 22nd day after the election. [WIS. STAT. § 11.1103\(3\)](#).

Records Retention Requirement

The treasurer of a candidate committee is required to maintain all records of the candidate committee in an organized and legible manner for three years following the end of each contribution limit period. [WIS. STAT. § 11.0201\(4\)](#) For example, a candidate is running for office at the Spring 2024 election. The applicable period runs from the date they become a candidate until June 30, 2024. The treasurer must maintain all records from that period until June 30, 2027. The candidate wins the election for a four-year term. The next applicable contribution limit period runs from July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2028. The treasurer must maintain the records from that period until June 30, 2031. This requirement also applies to committees on exemption.

Exceptions to Contribution Limits

The following contributions to candidate committees may be made in unlimited amounts:

1. Contributions that a candidate makes to his or her own candidate committee from the candidate's personal funds or property; ([WIS. STAT. § 11.1104\(7\)](#));
2. Contributions made by a political party committee or legislative campaign committee to a candidate committee ([WIS. STAT. § 11.1104\(5\)](#)); or
3. Contributions used to pay legal fees and other expenses incurred as a result of a recount or petitions to recall an officer. To qualify for this exclusion, recall expenses must occur before the recall election is ordered, or in contesting or defending the order ([WIS. STAT. § 11.1104\(9\)-\(11\)](#)). Contributions used to pay these recount or recall expenses must be reported on the regular campaign finance reports. Both the contributor and the candidate should indicate which contributions are being used for this purpose.

CONTRIBUTIONS AND DISBURSEMENTS

Candidate committees are required to make full reports of all contributions, disbursements, and obligations received, made, and incurred by the committee. Each report needs to include information covering the period since the last date covered on the previous report. [WIS. STAT. § 11.0204\(1\)\(a\)](#).

Contributions

“Contribution” means any of the following:

1. A gift, subscription, loan, advance, or transfer of money to a committee;
2. With the committee's consent under [WIS. STAT. § 11.1109](#), a transfer of tangible personal property or services to a committee, valued as provided under [WIS. STAT. § 11.1105](#);
3. A transfer of funds between committees; or
4. The purchase of a ticket for a fundraising event for a committee regardless of whether the ticket is used to attend the event.

[WIS. STAT. § 11.0101\(8\)\(a\)](#).

“Contribution” does not include any of the following:

1. Services that an individual provides to a committee, if the individual is not specifically compensated for providing the services to the committee;
2. Any unreimbursed travel expenses that an individual incurs to volunteer his or her personal services to a committee;
3. The costs of preparing and transmitting personal correspondence;
4. Interest earned on an interest-bearing account;
5. Rebates or awards earned in connection with the use of a debit or credit card;
6. A loan from a commercial lending institution that the institution makes in its ordinary course of business;
7. The reuse of surplus materials or the use of unused surplus materials acquired in connection with a previous campaign for or against the same candidate, political party, or recall if the materials were previously reported as a contribution;
8. The cost of invitations, food, and beverages in connection with an event held in a private residence on behalf of a candidate committee;
9. Any communication that does not expressly advocate for the election or defeat of a clearly identified candidate;
10. A communication made exclusively between an organization and its members. In this subdivision, a member of an organization means a shareholder, employee, or officer of the organization, or an individual who has affirmatively manifested an interest in joining, supporting, or aiding the organization;
11. Any cost incurred to conduct Internet activity by an individual acting in his or her own behalf, or acting in behalf of another person if the individual is not compensated specifically for those services, including the cost or value of any computers, software, Internet domain names, Internet service providers, and any other technology that is used to provide access to or use of the Internet, but not including professional video production services purchased by the individual; or
12. Any news story, commentary, or editorial by a broadcasting station, cable television operator, producer, or programmer, Internet site, or newspaper or other periodical publication, including an

Internet or other electronic publication unless a committee owns the medium in which the news story, commentary, or editorial appears.

[Wis. STAT. § 11.0101\(8\)\(b\).](#)

Required Information for Contributions

1. The date, full name, and street address of each person who has made a contribution to the candidate committee, together with the amount of the contribution. [Wis. STAT. § 11.0204\(1\)\(a\)1.](#)
2. The occupation, if any, of each individual contributor whose cumulative contributions to the candidate committee for the calendar year are in excess of \$200. [Wis. STAT. § 11.0204\(1\)\(a\)3.](#)
3. An itemized statement of each contribution made anonymously to the candidate committee. If the contribution exceeds \$10, the candidate committee shall specify whether the candidate committee donated the contribution to the common school fund or to a charitable organization and shall include the full name and mailing address of the donee. [Wis. STAT. § 11.0204\(1\)\(a\)4.](#)
4. A statement of totals during the reporting period of contributions received and contributions donated. [Wis. STAT. § 11.0204\(1\)\(a\)5.](#)

In-Kind Contributions

An in-kind contribution is any good, service, or property offered to the candidate committee free of charge or at less than the usual cost, or payment of the candidate committee's obligations for such goods, services, or property. [Wis. STAT. § 11.0101\(8\)\(a\)2.](#) Before making an in-kind contribution, the contributor is required to notify the candidate, candidate's agent, or the administrator or treasurer of the committee, and obtain either oral or written consent to the contribution. [Wis. STAT. § 11.1109.](#) In-kind contributions are subject to the same itemization thresholds and the same contribution limits as monetary contributions. [Wis. STAT. § 11.0101\(8\).](#) Monetary contributions and in-kind contributions from a single contributor are added together for the purposes of determining compliance with contribution limits and the year-to-date amount for a specific contributor. Wis. STAT. §§ [11.0101\(8\),](#) [11.1103.](#) If the contributor does not know the actual value of the contribution, a good faith and reasonable estimate of the fair market value should be provided to the candidate committee before the closing date of the next campaign finance report in which the contribution is required to be listed. [Wis. STAT. § 11.1105,](#) [Wis. ADMIN. CODE ETH 1.20\(5\).](#)

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 candidate committee from that campaign worker. When an individual is paid to work on behalf of a candidate by a person other than the candidate committee, the payment for those services is an in-kind contribution to the candidate committee. If a person offers to provide food and beverages for a fundraiser at less than the ordinary market price, the difference between the ordinary market price and the cost to the candidate committee is an in-kind contribution from the person. If another person pays for a newspaper, radio, or TV ad, and coordinates with the candidate committee about the content, timing, or other details of that ad, that ad would be an in-kind contribution.

Reporting In-Kind Contributions

An in-kind contribution received by the campaign committee is reported by the committee as **both a receipt and expenditure**. Reporting the amount of the in-kind contribution as a contribution allows the campaign to disclose the receipt of the contribution on its campaign finance report along with monetary contributions received and track year-to-date and campaign period totals. To keep the committee's cash

balance accurate, the amount of the in-kind received is also reported as an expenditure. The two entries offset each other so as to not affect the committee's cash balance.

If an estimate of the value of an in-kind contribution is the only value available at the time the candidate is required to file a report, the committee must report the estimated value of the contribution. [WIS. ADMIN. CODE ETH 1.20\(7\)](#). When the actual value of the estimated in-kind contribution is known, the actual amount is reported as an amendment to the original campaign finance report. [Id.](#)

Reporting of Joint Advertisements

When committees engage in joint advertising with other committees, there is an exchange of in-kind contributions between the committees. The committees are receiving something of value from the other committee: they are receiving the full value of the ad, but they are only paying for a portion of it. Each committee will report giving in-kind contributions in the amount that they paid and receiving in-kind contributions in the amount paid for by the other committee.

For example, Committee A and Committee B split the cost of a \$500 ad, paying \$250 each to the vendor. Each committee will report a \$250 disbursement to the vendor covering their half of the ad. Each committee must also report an in-kind contribution received from the other committee and an outgoing in-kind disbursement to the other committee. Committee A will report making an in-kind disbursement of \$250 to Committee B and receiving a \$250 in-kind contribution from Committee B. Committee B will report likewise.

These in-kind contributions count towards the contribution limits. For instance, if the contribution limit for Committee A is \$500, Committee B has now contributed \$250 to Committee A, assuming this is their first contribution. Committee B can contribute a maximum of \$250 more to Committee A for the applicable period. See the [CONTRIBUTION LIMITS](#) section in this guide for more information.

The in-kind contributions likewise count towards determining whether a committee has reached the threshold to remain on exempt status. In this example, each committee has reported \$500 of disbursements and \$250 of contributions, for a total of \$750 of aggregate activity. Joint advertising can cause a committee to rapidly reach the contribution limit and the exemption threshold, so be careful when considering such activity.

Contributions and Other Income from Businesses

Businesses may make contributions under some circumstances, but the restrictions vary by the type of business. A candidate should never list the name of a business as the contributor unless it is reported as "other income."

1. Corporations **may not contribute** to local or state candidates in the State of Wisconsin. [WIS. STAT. § 11.1112](#).
2. Sole proprietorships may contribute. The contribution must be reported under the name of the individual owner. This contribution counts toward the contribution limits from that individual to the candidate. [WIS. STAT. § 11.1113\(1\)](#).
3. Partnerships may contribute. The contribution must be reported under the names of the individual partners. The partnership may agree beforehand on how to allocate a portion of the contribution to each partner. If the partnership does not inform the candidate how the contribution should be allocated

between the partners, then the contribution should be divided up according to each partner's share of the partnership's profits. [WIS. STAT. § 11.1113\(2\)](#).

4. LLCs taxed as a sole proprietorship or partnership may contribute. The contribution must be reported under the name(s) of the individual owner(s). If there is more than one owner, contributions should be allocated as described in the partnership section above. [WIS. STAT. § 11.1113\(3\)](#). However, a candidate committee may not accept a contribution from an LLC taxed as a corporation.

Occasionally, a candidate committee may receive other income, like interest on a savings or checking account, or a refund of a security deposit, from a business. This other income is not a contribution and may be accepted from any type of business. [WIS. STAT. § 11.0101\(8\)\(b\)](#). The income should be reported as "Other Income" in campaign finance reports. [WIS. STAT. § 11.0204\(1\)\(a\)10](#).

Contributions Transferred through Conduits

A conduit is any individual, committee or group that receives contributions from individuals, deposits those contributions in a financial institution, and then transfers the contributions to a candidate or political committee selected by the original contributor. [WIS. STAT. § 11.0101\(7\)](#). The conduit may not exercise any discretion over the amount or ultimate recipient of the contributions. [WIS. STAT. § 11.0701\(3\)](#). A conduit is required to register with the Ethics Commission. [WIS. STAT. § 11.0702](#).

Reporting Conduit Contributions

Conduits are required to provide a transmittal letter with contribution checks sent to a receiving committee. The transmittal letter must identify the organization as a conduit, and list the individual contributors, the amount of each individual's contribution, and the date the individual authorized the contribution. [WIS. STAT. § 11.0704\(1\)](#). Contributions transferred through conduits are reported as contributions received from the individuals listed in the transmittal letter. [WIS. STAT. § 11.1106\(2\)](#). These contributions are reported under the individual's name. [WIS. STAT. § 11.1106\(1\)](#). They are subject to itemization on the same basis as other individual contributions. [WIS. STAT. § 11.0204\(1\)\(a\)](#).

Returned Contributions

A committee may return a contribution at any time before or after it has been deposited. [WIS. STAT. § 11.1110\(1\)](#), [WIS. ADMIN. CODE ETH 1.26](#). Any contribution a committee returns to the donor after depositing it in the campaign account must be reported as a returned contribution to the contributor. A committee that accepts an unlawful contribution, reports that contribution, and returns that contribution within 15 days of the filing date for that report does not violate the contribution or source limits. [WIS. STAT. § 11.1110\(2\)\(b\)](#). For example, a candidate receives a contribution from an individual on October 1, 2023. The candidate committee properly reports the contribution on the January 2024 Continuing Report, which was due and was filed on January 15, 2024. While preparing the January 2024 Continuing Report, the candidate realizes that the individual had already contributed the maximum amount for that contribution limit period. So, the candidate committee returns the contribution to the contributor on January 20, 2024. In this instance, the committee would not be in violation for exceeding the contribution limits. However, if the committee did not return the contribution until February 1, 2024, the subsequent return of the illegal contribution would not constitute a defense to the violation. [WIS. STAT. § 11.1110\(2\)\(a\)](#).

Prohibited Contributions

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

1. Anonymous contributions of more than \$10 ([WIS. STAT. § 11.1108](#));
2. Contributions in cash of more than \$100 ([WIS. STAT. § 11.1107](#));
3. Contributions given in the name of someone other than the contributor ([WIS. STAT. § 11.1204\(1\)](#));
4. Contributions from corporations, associations organized under ch. 185 or 193, labor organizations, or federally recognized American Indian Tribes ([WIS. STAT. § 11.1112](#));
5. Contributions in excess of the aggregate limits set by law (WIS. STAT. §§ [11.1101](#), [11.1204\(3\)](#)); or
6. Contributions from foreign nationals. [WIS. STAT. § 11.1208\(4\)](#).

Licensed lobbyists can make personal contributions to candidates for local office and their candidate committees, provided that the local candidate is **not** currently holding or a candidate for a partisan state elective office. [WIS. STAT. § 13.625\(1m\)](#). Lobbyists are prohibited from making campaign contributions to state candidates for partisan state office except between the first day authorized to circulate nominations papers and the day of a special or general election. Additionally, if the legislature is in session during that period, lobbyists may not make contributions to legislators or candidates or legislative office. *Id.* For further information on lobbyist contributions, visit the [Campaign Finance Prohibited Contributions](#) page on the Ethics Commission's website (<https://ethics.wi.gov>) or contact the Ethics Commission.

A candidate committee should monitor contributions carefully. If the candidate committee is aware that a contribution was received from a potentially prohibited source, the committee should confirm that the contribution is lawful. [WIS. STAT. § 11.1204\(3\)](#). It is recommended that a committee not accept any contributions if the committee cannot determine whether the contribution is lawful.

Disbursements

“Disbursement” means any of the following:

1. An expenditure by a committee from the committee's depository account;
2. The transfer of tangible personal property or services by a committee;
3. A transfer of funds between committees; or
4. The purchase of a ticket for a fundraising event for a committee regardless of whether the ticket is used to attend the event.

[WIS. STAT. § 11.0101\(10\)\(a\)](#).

“Disbursement” does not include any of the following:

1. A communication made exclusively between an organization and its members. In this subdivision, a member of an organization means a shareholder, employee, or officer of the organization, or an individual who has affirmatively manifested an interest in joining, supporting or aiding the organization;
2. A communication or Internet activity by an individual acting in his or her own behalf, or acting on behalf of another person if the individual is not compensated specifically for those services, including the cost or value of computers, software, Internet domain names, Internet service

providers, and any other technology that is used to provide access to or use of the Internet, but not including professional video production services purchased by the individual;

3. Any news story, commentary, or editorial by a broadcasting station, cable television operator, producer, or programmer, Internet site, or newspaper or other periodical publication, including an Internet or other electronic publication unless a committee owns the medium in which the news story, commentary, or editorial appears; or
4. A nominal fee paid for a communication to the general public.

[WIS. STAT. § 11.0101\(10\)\(b\).](#)

Required Information for Disbursements

1. The date, full name, and street address of each committee to which the candidate committee has made a contribution, together with the amount of the contribution. [WIS. STAT. § 11.0204\(1\)\(a\)2.](#)
2. An itemized statement of every disbursement exceeding \$20 in amount or value, together with the name and address of the person to whom the disbursement was made, and the date and specific purpose for which the disbursement was made. [WIS. STAT. § 11.0204\(1\)\(a\)8.](#)
3. A statement of totals during the reporting period of disbursements made. [WIS. STAT. § 11.0204\(1\)\(a\)10.](#)

Obligations and Loans

Candidate committees are required to make full reports of all obligations received, made, and incurred by the committee. The committee needs to include in each report information covering the period since the last date covered on the previous report. [WIS. STAT. § 11.0204\(1\)\(a\).](#) A loan received by a committee from any person or committee, other than a loan of money by a commercial lending institution in the ordinary course of business, is considered a contribution while outstanding and counts towards the contribution limit of the creditor. After repayment, the loan is no longer counted towards the limit. [WIS. STAT. § 11.0101\(8\)\(a\)1., WIS. ADMIN. CODE ETH 1.25.](#)

“Obligation” means any express agreement to make a disbursement, including the following:

1. A loan or loan guarantee;
2. A promise to purchase, rent, or lease tangible personal property; or
3. A promise to pay for a service that has been or will be performed.

[WIS. STAT. § 11.0101\(23\).](#)

Required Information for Obligations

1. An itemized statement of every obligation exceeding \$20 in amount or value, together with the name of the person or business with whom the obligation was incurred, and the date and the specific purpose for which each such obligation was incurred must be reported in campaign finance reports. [WIS. STAT. § 11.0204\(1\)\(a\)9.](#)
2. A statement of the balance of obligations incurred as of the end of the reporting period. [WIS. STAT. § 11.0204\(1\)\(a\)11.](#)

Required Information for Loans

Each loan of money made to the candidate committee must be reported with all of the following:

1. The full name and mailing address of the lender;
2. A statement of whether the lender is a commercial lending institution;
3. The date and amount of the loan;
4. The full name and mailing address of each guarantor, if any;
5. The original amount guaranteed by each guarantor; and
6. The balance of the amount guaranteed by each guarantor at the end of the reporting period.

[WIS. STAT. § 11.0204\(1\)\(a\)7.](#)

Cash Balances

Candidate committees are required to provide a statement of the cash on hand at the beginning and end of each reporting period. [WIS. STAT. § 11.0204\(1\)\(a\)6.](#) The beginning cash balance should match the ending cash balance of the prior report. The ending cash balance should equal the beginning cash balance plus all receipts and minus all expenditures.

CAMPAIGN FINANCE REPORTS

All registrants that are not exempt from filing must file campaign finance reports. [WIS. STAT. § 11.0103\(1\)](#).

The information listed on the campaign finance report discloses the financial activity of the candidate committee. The law requires disclosure of income, disbursements, and incurred obligations. [WIS. STAT. § 11.0204\(1\)\(a\)](#). For all contributors, the report must disclose the individual's name and address. [WIS. STAT. § 11.0204\(1\)\(a\)1](#). If the individual's year-to-date total exceeds \$200, the report must also provide the individual's occupation. [WIS. STAT. § 11.0204\(1\)\(a\)3](#). Treasurers and candidates are required to make a "good faith effort" to obtain all information required on the reports. [WIS. STAT. § 11.0103\(1\)\(a\)](#).

Types of Reports

Candidates on the ballot must file a pre-primary and a pre-election report which is due eight days before the primary or general election. WIS. STAT. §§ [11.0204\(3\)\(a\)](#), [\(5\)\(a\)](#). Candidates for local nonpartisan office do not have to file pre-primary reports if they do not appear on a primary ballot. [WIS. STAT. § 11.0204\(2\)\(a\)](#). Candidates that lose in the primary or general election must continue to file reports until they are eligible for, and request, termination of their committee. [WIS. STAT. § 11.0207](#). Candidates must also file continuing reports in January and July of each year until they terminate their candidate committee, even if not on the ballot. WIS. STAT. §§ [11.0204\(3\)\(b\)](#), [\(5\)\(b\)](#), [\(c\)](#).

With some restrictions, candidate committees that will not spend or receive more than \$2,500 in a calendar year may amend their registration and claim "exempt" status, which means they do not have to file campaign finance reports. [WIS. STAT. § 11.0104](#). See the [EXEMPTION FROM FILING CAMPAIGN FINANCE REPORTS](#) section in this guide for more information.

All candidates wishing to terminate are required to file a termination report. [WIS. STAT. § 11.0105\(1\)\(a\)](#). If a candidate claims exemption and wishes to terminate after the election, they must file a report showing all contributions and all disbursements for the calendar year. See [Id.](#)

Reporting Periods and Elections

Spring Primary: A candidate at the spring primary must file: (1) a pre-primary report; (2) a pre-election report; and (3) annually in each year of an election cycle, a report on January 15 and July 15. [WIS. STAT. § 11.0204\(2\)](#).

Spring Election: A candidate at the spring election must file: (1) a pre-election report; and (2) annually in each year of an election cycle, a report on January 15 and July 15. [WIS. STAT. § 11.0204\(3\)](#).

Partisan Primary: A candidate at a partisan primary must file: (1) a pre-primary report; (2) a pre-election report; (3) in an odd-numbered year, a report on January 15 and July 15; and (4) in an even-numbered year, a report on January 15, July 15, and September 30. [WIS. STAT. § 11.0204\(4\)](#).

General Election: A candidate at a general election must file: (1) a pre-election report; (2) in an odd-numbered year, a report on January 15 and July 15; and (3) in an even numbered year, a report on January 15, July 15, and September 30. [WIS. STAT. § 11.0204\(5\)](#).

Special Election: A candidate at a special election must file: (1) a pre-primary report if a primary is held; (2) a pre-election report; (3) a report on January 15 and July 15; and (4) unless a continuing report is required within 45 days after the special election, a post-election report.

Reporting deadlines can be found on the Ethics Commission's website at:
<https://ethics.wi.gov/Pages/CampaignFinance/ReportPeriods.aspx>.

How to Complete Campaign Finance Reports

The Ethics Commission requires local candidate committees to file all necessary reports with the appropriate filing officer with the Local Campaign Finance Report (<https://ethics.wi.gov/Resources/CF-2L>) or the Electronic Local Campaign Finance Report (<https://ethics.wi.gov/Resources/CF-2LE>), if the filing officer accepts reports in an electronic format. WIS. STAT. §§ [11.0204\(1\)\(a\)](#), [11.1304\(1\)](#).

When completing the reports, each schedule shall begin with the first contribution received, disbursement made, or obligation incurred. [WIS. STAT. § 11.0204\(1\)\(b\)](#). All contributions received by the committee must be reported in Schedule 1 (Receipts) of the campaign finance report. Contributions and loans from individuals are listed in Schedule 1-A (Contributions Including Loans from Individuals). Contributions from other committees, such as political action committees, political party committees, and other candidate committees, are reported in Schedule 1-B (Contributions from Committees). All other income, such as loans from financial institutions, contributions returned from other registrants, refunds, returns of deposits or interest on investments are reported in Schedule 1-C (Other Income and Commercial Loans). The date which must be provided for all contributions is the date the committee **received** the contribution, that is, the date it acquired possession and control of the contribution, **not** the date of deposit or date on the check (unless all dates are the same). [WIS. STAT. § 11.0103\(2\)\(a\)1](#).

All money spent by the committee is reported in Schedule 2 (Disbursements) of the campaign finance report. General operating expenditures are listed in Schedule 2-A (Gross Expenditures). Contributions to other political committees are listed in Schedule 2-B (Contributions to Committees).

Additional information required to be disclosed is reported in Schedule 3 (Additional Disclosure) of the campaign finance report. All obligations of the committee such as unpaid debts are listed in Schedule 3-A (Incurred Obligations Excluding Loans). Loans and the individuals who guarantee loans for the committee are listed in Schedule 3-B (Loans).

A Termination Request ([CF-13](#)) is used for requests to terminate a committee. This form should be filed along with the candidate's final report. See the [TERMINATION OF CAMPAIGN FINANCE REGISTRATION](#) section in this guide for more information.

No-Activity Report ("Postcard Report")

If a candidate committee receives no contributions, makes no disbursements and incurs no obligations during a reporting period, the committee may file a "No-Activity Report," or "Postcard Report," ([https://ethics.wi.gov/Resources/CF-2NA Statement of No Activity.pdf](https://ethics.wi.gov/Resources/CF-2NA%20Statement%20of%20No%20Activity.pdf)). This form should be used **only** when there has been no financial activity and the cash balance remains unchanged during the reporting period. [WIS. STAT. § 11.0103\(3\)\(d\)](#).

ATTRIBUTION STATEMENTS (DISCLAIMERS)

Attribution statements, commonly referred to as disclaimers, are statements required to be placed on any communication containing express advocacy in order to identify the person(s) who paid for and/or authorized the communication. [WIS. STAT. § 11.1303\(2\)](#).

Express advocacy refers to a communication that references a clearly identified candidate and unambiguously relates to the election or defeat of that candidate. Examples include “Vote for John Doe,” “Reelect your Incumbent Mayor,” or “Doe for City Council.” [WIS. STAT. § 11.0101\(11\)](#).

No disbursement by a candidate committee may be made anonymously and no contribution or disbursement may be made in a fictitious name or by one person or organization in the name of another. [WIS. STAT. § 11.1303\(1\)](#).

Every printed advertisement, billboard, handbill, sample ballot, television or radio advertisement, or other communication containing express advocacy which is paid for by any contribution or disbursement shall clearly identify its source. [WIS. STAT. § 11.1303\(2\)\(a\)](#).

Every communication containing express advocacy the cost of which is paid for or reimbursed by a committee, or for which a committee assumes responsibility, whether by accepting a contribution or making a disbursement, shall identify its source by the words "Paid for by" followed by the name of the committee making the payment or reimbursement or assuming responsibility for the communication and may include the name of the treasurer or other authorized agent of the committee. [WIS. STAT. § 11.1303\(2\)\(b\)](#).

Attribution statements are not required on communications containing express advocacy printed on small items on which the information required cannot be conveniently printed, including text messages, social media communications, and certain small advertisements on mobile phones. [WIS. STAT. § 11.1303\(2\)\(f\)](#). Attribution statements are also not required on business cards, buttons, pencils, pens, pins, skywriting, tickets, or small online ads and similar electronic communications where the language required could not conveniently be included, and that either link directly to a website that includes the required attribution, or provide an automatic display that includes the attribution. [WIS. ADMIN. CODE ETH 1.96\(5\)](#).

Formats for Disclaimers

When a communication is paid for by a candidate committee, the disclaimer must include the words “Paid for by,” followed by the name of the committee:

“Paid for by Friends of Mary Smith.”

The disclaimer may also include the name of the treasurer or other authorized agent:

“Paid for by Friends of Mary Smith for Mayor, James Jones, Treasurer.”

When a communication is paid for by another in coordination with a candidate committee, both the person making the payment and the committee accepting the in-kind contribution should be listed:

“Paid for by Citizens for Government, Authorized by Mary Smith for Governor.”

Attribution statements must be readable, legible, and readily accessible. [WIS. STAT. § 11.1303\(2\)\(g\)](#). That is, each individual letter or character must be clearly printed so that it can be easily understood, it can be read easily, and it can be seen without much difficulty. [WIS. ADMIN. CODE ETH § 1.96\(1\)](#). A disclaimer is evident to be readable, legible, and readily accessible if it meets all of the following requirements:

1. It appears in a sans-serif font.
2. The font is sufficiently large. On a written communication no larger than 8.5 inches by 11 inches, it is printed in at least 10-point font. On a written communication larger than 8.5 inches by 11 inches but smaller than 24 inches by 36 inches, it is printed in at least 12-point font. On a larger written communication, the letters are at least four percent of the vertical height of the written communication.
3. It appears in black text on a white background, or the contrast between the background color and the text color is at least as great as between the background color and text color of the largest text in the communication.
4. It remains visible for a period of at least four seconds.

[WIS. ADMIN. CODE ETH 1.96\(3\)](#).

All attribution statements shall be presented in a clear and conspicuous manner that gives the recipient of the communication adequate notice of the identity of the person making the payment or reimbursement or assuming responsibility for the communication. [WIS. ADMIN CODE ETH 1.96\(2\)](#).

TERMINATION OF CAMPAIGN FINANCE REGISTRATION

A candidate committee may terminate its registration if it meets the following requirements [WIS. STAT. § 11.0105](#):

1. Determines that all financial activity will stop, and that she or he will no longer receive contributions, make disbursements, or incur obligations;
2. Files a termination campaign finance report showing that all incurred obligations have been paid or satisfied, and that the cash balance has been reduced to zero; and
3. Completes a request for termination using the Termination Request Form, [CF-13](#).

A candidate may not terminate his or her registration before a primary or election in which he or she is a candidate. If a candidate loses a primary, he or she may terminate before the election. [WIS. STAT. § 11.0105\(1\)\(b\)](#). Within 10 days after losing an election, the candidate or other authorized person should either: 1) Amend the registration statement to update the office sought or election date if the candidate would like to run for office at a future election; or 2) terminate the candidate committee.

Incumbent office holders are candidates. Because candidates are required to file a campaign finance registration statement, an incumbent officer holder cannot terminate his or her campaign finance registration prior to leaving office. WIS. STAT. §§ [11.0101\(1\)\(c\)](#), [11.0202\(1\)\(a\)](#). Incumbents with limited financial activity may file for “exempt” status, which means they would not have to file campaign finance reports during that time. See the “[EXEMPTION FROM FILING CAMPAIGN FINANCE REPORTS](#)” section in this guide for more information.

Disposal of Residual Funds

Residual funds may be used for any purpose that is not for an individual’s strictly personal use and is not prohibited by law, including:

1. Repay any outstanding loans. If loans are not repaid, they must be forgiven before the committee can request termination;
2. Returning money to contributors in amounts that are not more than the contributor’s original contribution (note: the candidate or treasurer may choose which contributors to refund. The committee is not required to pro-rate and return a portion to all contributors);
3. Donating money to any tax-exempt charitable organization or the Common School Fund;
4. Transferring money to another registrant within the permitted contribution limit; or
5. Using any combination of the above.

WIS. STAT. §§ [11.0105](#), [11.1208\(2\)\(a\)](#).

Prior to making these disbursements of residual funds, make sure the committee does not have any pending settlement offers.