

Qualifying Methods

Florida has three distinct methods for qualifying as a candidate:

- By paying a qualifying fee;
- By petition process; or,
- By running as a write-in candidate.

Qualifying by Paying a Qualifying Fee

The required fee is based upon the salary of the office the candidate is running for and will include a party assessment for partisan candidates. This fee can only be paid during the qualifying period:

- Noon, April 20, 2026 – noon, April 24, 2026, for Federal, Judicial, State Attorney and Public Defender candidates.
- Noon, June 8, 2026 – noon, June 12, 2026, for State, Multi-District and Local candidates.

	Annual Salary	3% Filing Fee	1% Election Assessment	2% Party Assessment	Total Qualifying Fee
Florida House	\$29,697	\$890.91	\$296.97	\$593.94	\$1,781.82
County Commission	\$81,575	\$2,447.25	\$815.75	\$1,631.50	\$4,894.50
19th Circuit Judge	\$196,898	\$5,906.94	\$1,968.98		\$7,875.92
County Judge	\$186,034	\$5,581.02	\$1,860.34		\$7,441.36
School Board	\$44,140	\$1,324.20	\$441.40		\$1,765.60

Qualifying by the Petition Process

A person seeking elected office may qualify to have his or her name placed on the ballot by means of the petitioning process.

Payment for verifying petition signatures must be paid in advance of verification. The cost is \$.10 per petition.

The deadline for federal, judicial, state attorney and public defender candidates to submit their petitions is **noon, March 23, 2026**

The deadline for statewide, multi-county, county, and district candidates to submit their petitions is **noon, May 11, 2026**

During the petition collection period a candidate must collect the signatures of **one (1%) percent** of the registered voters residing in the district as of the last general election (November 2024) unless otherwise specified.

Office Sought	Number of Petitions Required
Florida House Representative 85	1,461
Florida House Representative 86	1,264
County Commission	1,167
19 th Circuit Judge	5,011
County Judge	1,167
School Board	1,167

DO NOT START COLLECTING SIGNATURES UNTIL THE APPOINTMENT OF CAMPAIGN TREASURER AND DESIGNATION OF CAMPAIGN DEPOSITORY HAS BEEN FILED WITH THE QUALIFYING OFFICER.

PETITION FORMS

Candidates must reproduce petition forms, DS-DE 104, as prescribed by the State of Florida, Division of Elections.

Important
Prior to collecting signatures, the petition cards must contain the name of the candidate, the office, the party designation, if applicable, and the group or district number.

COLLECTING SIGNATURES

Once the Appointment of Campaign Treasurer and Designation of Campaign Depository is on file, the candidate may begin collecting signatures on petitions supporting his or her candidacy.

Note
For a person's signature to be counted as valid, the person must be registered to vote in Martin County.

SUBMITTING PETITIONS FOR VERIFICATION

All signatures will be verified by a Supervisor of Elections staff person. Payment is due in advance of verification. The fee must be paid with a check from the candidate's campaign account and made payable to the Supervisor of Elections.

Undue Burden Oath (F.S 99.097) - An oath, that states you are unable to pay the charges for verifying petitions without imposing an undue burden on your personal resources or on resources otherwise available to you, may be signed and the verification fee will be waived. However, the following was signed into law in 2011:

- If any person is paid to solicit signatures, an undue burden cannot be filed
- If undue burden is filed and payment is subsequently made to any person to solicit signatures, the undue burden is no longer valid
- If contributions are received, they must first be used to reimburse the supervisor of elections for verification fees

We are only able to validate signatures on petitions signed by registered voters who appear on our computer file. Therefore, if a newly registered voter signs a petition and the petition is processed before the voter's name is entered into our voter files, the petition cannot be counted as valid.

Not Valid:

- Copies of signatures faxed or otherwise.

Candidates may:

- Inquire about the progress and count of their petitions at any time.
- Monitor the petition validation process upon request.
- Review the petitions after they have been processed.

Petitions submitted to the Supervisor of Elections office for processing shall remain in the custody of the Supervisor of Elections.

CERTIFICATE OF PETITION QUALIFYING

Prior to the first date for qualifying, the Supervisor of Elections will notify the candidate if he or she has the required number of valid signatures and whether or not any verification fee balance is due. The supervisor will provide successful candidates with a "**Certificate of Petition Qualifying**".

PENALTIES:

F.S. 104.185 Petitions - Knowingly signing a petition more than once; signing another person's name or a fictitious name.

1. A person who knowingly signs a petition or petitions for a candidate, minor political party, or an issue more than one time commits a misdemeanor of the first degree, punishable as provided s. 775.082 or s. 775.0823.
2. A person who signs another person's name or a fictitious name to any petition to secure ballot position for a candidate, a minor political party, or an issue commits a misdemeanor of the first degree, punishable as provided in s. 775.082 or s. 775.083.

Qualifying as a Write-in Candidate

Write-in candidates **will not** be required to pay a qualifying fee or submit petitions. Write-in candidates must comply with all the finance laws and submit the proper loyalty oath and financial disclosure at the time of qualifying. Write-in candidates must reside within the district represented by the office sought at the time of qualifying. Write-in candidates shall qualify for the general election only and their names will not appear on the ballot. For ballots to be tabulated for a write-in candidate, the candidate must have qualified with the proper filing officer.