# Running for county office in Sample County: frequently asked questions

**DRAFT FOR REVIEW** Not approved for public use. Sample County is fictional.

Answers to questions our qualifying desk hears most often from people thinking about running for a county office in Sample County. Each answer gives the page in the Florida Division of Elections' Candidate and Campaign Treasurer Handbook (Rev. 07/14/2026) and the Florida Statutes section it comes from. These answers are a summary. The handbook and Florida law control. Our office can't give legal advice. For legal questions, read the handbook, call the Division of Elections, or talk with your own attorney.

## 1. What do I file first, and where?

Form DS-DE 9, Appointment of Campaign Treasurer and Designation of Campaign Depository, is the first document you file. It names your treasurer, your campaign bank, and the office you're seeking. For countywide offices and district offices within the county, you file with the Supervisor of Elections: **[NEED: Sample County office address, hours, phone, and candidate web page]**. You may announce that you're running before you file it, but until it's filed you can't accept contributions, spend campaign money, or collect petition signatures.

*Source: Handbook pp. 8–9, 19, 84; s. 106.021(1)(a); s. 106.011(11); s. 99.061(2), F.S.*

## 2. What's due after Form DS-DE 9?

Within 10 days, file Form DS-DE 84, Statement of Candidate. It says you've been given access to read and understand the state's campaign finance law (Chapter 106). Since 2026, you also file a written oath that you meet, or will meet, the qualifications for the office.

*Source: Handbook p. 9; s. 106.023(1), (3), F.S.*

## 3. Can I be my own campaign treasurer?

Yes. You can also name up to 3 deputy treasurers. Your treasurer doesn't have to be a registered voter in Florida. Each treasurer must accept the appointment in writing.

*Source: Handbook pp. 19, 86; s. 106.021(1)(a), (1)(c), F.S.*

## 4. Do I need to open the bank account before I file Form DS-DE 9?

No. On the form, you only name the bank (the “campaign depository”). You open the account after the form is filed. It must be separate from your personal accounts, and every contribution must be deposited by the end of the 5th business day.

*Source: Handbook pp. 8, 19–20, 22; s. 106.021(1)(a); s. 106.05, F.S.*

## 5. When is qualifying?

For county offices, state law sets a qualifying week that opens at noon on the 71st day before the primary election and closes at noon on the 67th day before it. The dates for the next election are **[NEED: qualifying dates from the Division of Elections calendar]**. The law lets our office accept and hold papers turned in up to 14 days before qualifying begins. They're processed and filed once qualifying opens.

*Source: s. 99.061(2), (8), F.S.*

## 6. How much is the qualifying fee, and how do I pay it?

The fee is a percentage of the office's annual salary: a 3% filing fee and a 1% election assessment, plus a 2% party assessment if your party levies one. Pay it with a check drawn on your campaign account. The amount for each Sample County office is here: **[NEED: link to Sample County's official fee list]**. The fee is not refunded unless you withdraw before the last day of qualifying.

*Source: Handbook p. 32; s. 99.092(1); s. 99.061(7)(a)1., F.S.*

## 7. Can I get on the ballot without paying the fee?

Yes, by petition. After you file Form DS-DE 9, collect signatures equal to 1% of the registered voters in the area the office serves. Turn them in to the Supervisor of Elections before noon on the 28th day before qualifying begins. Write-in candidates also pay no fee, but their names aren't printed on the ballot.

*Source: Handbook p. 85; s. 99.095(1), (2)(a), (3); s. 99.061(4)(b), F.S.*

## 8. What must our office receive by the end of qualifying?

The fee check (unless you qualified by petition or are a write-in), the candidate's oath with your ballot name, a party or no-party statement for a partisan office, Form DS-DE 9, your financial disclosure, and a written oath about citizenship of another country. The Sample County qualifying checklist lists each one. The ballot name can't be changed after qualifying ends.

*Source: Handbook pp. 8, 11, 19, 32; s. 99.061(5), (7)(a), (7)(b); s. 99.021(1)(b); s. 112.3144(1); s. 112.3145(2), F.S.*

## 9. Which financial disclosure form do I file?

It depends on the office. Candidates for a constitutional office, or for another office whose holder files annually with the Commission on Ethics under s. 112.3144 (this includes mayors and elected city or town governing-body members), file a full and public disclosure of financial interests. Other candidates, including most county offices, file a statement of financial interests under s. 112.3145. The Commission on Ethics or your attorney can tell you which applies. If you already file one each year with the Commission on Ethics, you may be able to turn in a copy or a receipt of electronic filing instead. Ask the Commission on Ethics or your attorney.

*Source: s. 99.061(5), (7)(a)6.; s. 112.3144(1); s. 112.3145(2), F.S.*

## 10. I already hold a public office. Do I have to resign?

Maybe. Florida's resign-to-run law can require an officer to resign to run for another office whose term overlaps. If it applies, the written resignation is due at least 10 days before qualifying begins, and it can't be taken back. Some subordinate officers, deputy sheriffs, and police officers must resign when they run against a boss who has qualified for re-election to that office. The federal Hatch Act may also apply to some government employees; the Division refers those questions to the U.S. Office of Special Counsel. Our office can't tell you whether either law applies to you. Ask your own attorney.

*Source: Handbook pp. 9–10; s. 99.012(3)(b), (3)(c), (5), F.S.*

## 11. What if something is missing from my qualifying papers?

If we receive your papers during qualifying and an item is missing or incomplete, we'll make a reasonable effort to tell you. Everything must still be received by noon on the last day. Our review is “ministerial”: we check that each item is filed and complete on its face. We don't decide whether what you wrote is accurate.

*Source: s. 99.061(7)(b), (7)(c), F.S.*

## 12. When are campaign reports due, and what if one is late?

Reports are due the 10th day after the end of each calendar quarter, starting when you file Form DS-DE 9, except for the third calendar quarter right before a general election. In the election year, more reports are due before the primary and general elections. If you have no activity in a period, you still must tell us in writing by the due date. Late fines are $50 a day for the first 3 days, then $500 a day. For the reports just before the primary and general elections, it is $500 a day from day 1. Fines are capped at 25% of receipts or expenditures and must come from your personal funds. **[NEED: how Sample County receives campaign reports]**

*Source: Handbook pp. 56–58; s. 106.07(1), (1)(b), (2)(a), (7), (8)(a), (8)(b), F.S.*

## 13. How much can one person give to my campaign?

For countywide and district offices, $1,000 per person, per election. The primary and general are separate elections. Cash (or a cashier's check) is limited to $50 per person, per election. If you're opposed, you must return contributions received on election day or less than 5 days before it.

*Source: Handbook pp. 26, 28–29; s. 106.08(1)(a)3., (3)(a); s. 106.09(1)(a), F.S.*

## 14. What do my ads and signs need to say?

Paid political ads need a disclaimer, such as “Political advertisement paid for and approved by” followed by your name, party affiliation, and the office. The wording must match the law exactly. The handbook has examples and exceptions.

*Source: Handbook p. 40; s. 106.143(1)(a), F.S.*

## 15. Can your office tell me whether I'm eligible, or give me legal advice?

No. Our staff can explain forms and deadlines, but we can't give legal advice or decide whether you're eligible. Read the handbook, call the Division of Elections at 850.245.6200, or talk with your own attorney.

*Source: Handbook p. 1; s. 99.061(7)(c), F.S.*

## Official sources

- Candidate and Campaign Treasurer Handbook (Rev. 07/14/2026), Florida Division of Elections
- Division of Elections Publications/Reports page (current handbooks)
- Division of Elections Qualifying Information page (qualifying periods and law-change notices)
- s. 99.012, F.S.: Restrictions on individuals qualifying for public office (resign-to-run)
- s. 99.021, F.S.: Form of candidate oath
- s. 99.061, F.S.: Method of qualifying for nomination or election to federal, state, county, or district office
- s. 99.092, F.S.: Qualifying fee of candidate
- s. 99.095, F.S.: Petition process in lieu of a qualifying fee and party assessment
- s. 106.011, F.S.: Definitions (filing officer)
- s. 106.021, F.S.: Campaign treasurers; deputies; primary and secondary depositories
- s. 106.023, F.S.: Statement of candidate; written oath or affirmation required
- s. 106.05, F.S.: Deposit of contributions
- s. 106.07, F.S.: Reports; certification and filing
- s. 106.08, F.S.: Contributions; limitations on
- s. 106.09, F.S.: Cash contributions and contribution by cashier's checks
- s. 106.143, F.S.: Political advertisements circulated prior to election; requirements
- s. 112.3144, F.S.: Full and public disclosure of financial interests
- s. 112.3145, F.S.: Disclosure of financial interests and clients represented before agencies

Handbook pages are the page numbers printed at the bottom of each handbook page. Statutes were checked on Online Sunshine (2026 Florida Statutes) on September 26 and October 2, 2026 (late fines, report dates, termination report).

**These answers are a summary, not legal advice, and they don't replace the handbook. The handbook and Florida law control. Our staff can explain forms and deadlines but can't tell you whether you're eligible. Legal questions: the Florida Division of Elections (850.245.6200) or your own attorney.**