

WHY AND HOW TO RUN FOR LOCAL ELECTED OFFICE

This informational booklet provides answers to common questions:

Who can
help
me?

Am I
eligible?

Which
office?

What's
required?

And
More!

Should
I run?

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serving the south
Wood County area





TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION3

2. DECIDING TO RUN FOR LOCAL OFFICE

Should You Run? 4-5

Are You Eligible?5

3. REQUIREMENTS TO RUN

Important Dates to Remember.....6

Checklist for Running for Local Elected Office7

Nominations and Ballot Placement

Nomination Process8

Caucus Process..... 9-11

4. CAMPAIGN CONSIDERATIONS

Mapping the Campaign12-13

Writing and Submitting an Effective Press Release 14

5. CAMPAIGN FINANCES

Campaign Finance Registration Requirements15-17

6. SPEAK YOUR PEACE – THE CIVILITY CAMPAIGN18-19

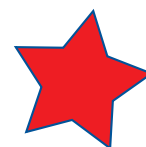
7. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Other Ways to Get Involved in Local Government 20

Books and Websites 20

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Updated October 2012





You Can Make a Difference in Your Community

Carry on the Tradition of Our Country's Founders

A strong democracy depends on engaged citizens and dedicated, competent, leaders willing to step forward and serve in public offices. No matter which public office – school board, town board, county board, city council, sheriff, or others – our public institutions become stronger when interested candidates offer voters choices as to who will represent them.

By running for public office, you help sustain the democracy envisioned by our country's founders. They created a unique system that put governing in the hands of the people. This astonishing system works because people like you have the courage and determination to run for and hold public office. Serving in public office provides the opportunity to use your skills, talents, and experience to be a creative force for positive change in your community.

The best way to determine what a community wants is to listen to what its people have to say. This is a fundamental principle of democracy. Disagreements can lead to healthy debate, which brings new information and ideas to light. When a particular issue strikes at the fundamental beliefs of a group or individual, the debate can be especially fierce. In these situations, it becomes more important than ever to practice civility.

As you consider running for public elected office, know that efforts are underway to create an atmosphere in our community that stresses civil discourse. Speak Your Peace – the Civility Project urges the citizens in the south Wood County area to communicate in a more respectful and effective way. It is not a campaign to end disagreements. It is a campaign to improve public discourse by simply reminding ourselves of the very basic principles of respect.

By elevating our level of communication and avoiding personal attacks and general stubbornness, we can avoid unhealthy debate. This will lead to a more effective democracy, and help maintain our sense of community by increasing civic participation.

Congratulations for your interest in running for public office. You are about to embark on a truly noble profession.

Should You Run for Office?

Elected officials in Wisconsin cite a number of reasons for running for local office. Many run inspired by the general desire to contribute to their communities, while others are motivated by dissatisfaction with the incumbent and the belief that they could do a better job. Some are recruited by friends and neighbors. Still others are driven to seek office by a single burning issue.

No matter what the reason for running for political office, potential candidates must carefully appraise both themselves and the political climate they would enter. The questions asked in this information gathering process will not have right or wrong answers, but will aid in making a reasoned decision. Following is a list of areas for assessment and research.

Personal strengths and weaknesses Why run for this particular office? What is the attitude of your family toward your candidacy? Is your self confidence strong enough to take public and/or personal criticism? To what extent is the candidate prepared to work on a variety of topics and issues?

Political strengths and weaknesses What is your relationship with your community – length of residence, association with community leaders, friends from a cross section of the community? With what issues or problems are you identified? Can you speak audibly, concisely, and authoritatively? Can you attract an appropriate number of workers and contributors? Are you able to deal with today's opponents in a way that will allow them to be allies tomorrow? What is your political experience?

The electorate What voting patterns emerge from past elections? What is the majority party? What percentage of voters turns out to vote? What percentage of citizens are registered to vote? What is the demographic composition of the district?

The opposition How many opponents are there likely to be? Is the incumbent an opponent? What are the personal and political strengths and weaknesses of each potential opponent? Have any made a previous race and what were their campaign tactics?

Legal requirements What are the applicable election laws, including filing and qualifying requirements, finance laws, legal deadlines, and dates?

Political tradition What campaign activities are traditional or expected by the electorate? What amount of money has been spent by both winning and losing candidates for this office in previous elections?

Opinion influences What local issues have provoked local debate or citizen reaction lately? What issues surround this particular office? What other races or issues will be on the ballot? Who really makes decisions in the community? What are the influential organizations? What are the prevailing community media outlets?



The office Is this the correct office for the candidate? What intrinsic rewards does the office offer? Does this office hold the potential to influence the kinds of changes that the candidate wants to see? What kind of time commitment will be necessary if the candidate is elected?

Time How many days are there until Election Day? How much time will the candidate have for the campaign? How much time can core supporters give?

Money What is the fund raising tradition in the community? How much “early money” can be raised? How much money can the candidates, their families, their closest friends, and their key supporters contribute to the campaign? What are the additional potential sources of individual contributions? What organizations make political contributions and which are likely to contribute to this candidate?

Ethics Ethics laws in Wisconsin place limitations on elected officials’ ability to sell goods and services to the municipality for which they hold office. Does the candidate have a financial conflict of interest? Is the candidate willing to give up revenue that a family-owned business might otherwise earn from selling to the municipality?

If this appraisal period leads to the decision to run for office, the information gathered will provide you with a basis for a campaign plan.

This was the first in a series of excerpts from the Campaign Handbook, published by the National Women’s Education Fund, Washington, DC 20035.



Am I
eligible for office?

- ✓ Citizen of the United States of America
- ✓ Resident of the appropriate jurisdiction
- ✓ 18 years of age or older
- ✓ Not a convicted felon

Ready
for the
next
steps?



Important Dates to Remember

☆ Campaign Dates

From December 1 until 5:00 p.m. on the first Tuesday in January

- Period for circulating and filing nomination papers for **Spring Election** candidates.

Last Tuesday in January

- The last day for holding town and village caucuses when ordered by the governing body.

From April 15 until 5:00 p.m. on June 1

- Period for circulating and filing nomination papers for **General Election** candidates.

☆ Election Dates

Third Tuesday in February

- Presidential Preference Primary in presidential election years (pending legislative changes)
- Nonpartisan Primary Election, if necessitated by number of candidates for an office in Spring Election.
- Referendum(a), if any



First Tuesday in April

- Nonpartisan election for local officials, Superintendent of Public Instruction, Supreme Court justices, appeals court judges, circuit court judges, county supervisors, etc.
- Referendum(a), if any

Second Tuesday in August

- Fall Partisan Primary, if necessitated by number of candidates for an office in General Election
- Referendum(a), if any

Tuesday after the first Monday in November

- General Election for president, vice president, senator, representative, governor, lieutenant governor, attorney general, secretary of state, state treasurer, state senator and representative, and county offices (besides supervisors)
- Referendum(a), if any

☆ Voter Registration Dates *(As of 2006 all voters must be registered)*

By U.S. Mail: Must be postmarked no later than 20th day (3rd Wed.) before an election

In Person: In the clerk's office up until 5 p.m. or close of business the Friday before the election

On Election day: At the polls with acceptable proof of residency

Source: League of Women Voters of Wisconsin and the Government Accountability Board

Checklist For Running For Local Elected Office

- ☐ Decide which public office is right for you.
 - ☐ Decide to run for office.
 - ☐ Register with the appropriate filing officer (Government Accountability Board, county, municipal or school clerk). Ask for *Campaign Finance and Book Keeping Manual* and fill out State Elections Board Form EB1 (<http://elections.state.wi.us/>) before you accept donations or begin campaigning.
 - ☐ Meet with supporters to discuss issues and campaign strategy (see page 12).
 - ☐ Appoint a campaign committee. In most local races the candidate serves as the committee.
 - ☐ Ask the clerk if the nomination procedure for your chosen office requires nomination papers or caucus.
 - **Nomination Papers:** The candidate must circulate nomination papers and compile signatures from the district he/she seeks to represent. Nomination papers are usually used in city and county elections (see page 8).
Ask the clerk:
 - o What is the earliest date to circulate nomination papers?
 - o When is the deadline for filing nomination papers?
 - o What is the minimum number of signatures required? (Get 20% extra.)
- Or,
- **Caucus:** The candidate must be nominated from the floor or by secret ballot for the office. If more than two candidates are nominated, a vote will take place at the caucus. A caucus is usually used in town and village elections (see page 9). Any US citizen over 18 years of age who has resided in the district for at least 10 days before the caucus is a qualified elector.
Ask the clerk:
 - o When will the caucus be held?
- ☐ Receive in writing, notice of your nomination from your clerk.
- ☐ **Within five days** of receiving written notice from your clerk, fill out Government Accountability Board Form GAB162 (<http://elections.state.wi.us/>) Municipal judges need to fill out a Statement of Economic Interest to the State Ethics Committee.
- ☐ Determine if you need to file campaign finance reports (see page 15).
 - If you don't anticipate accepting contributions, making disbursements, incurring loans, or other obligations exceeding \$1,000 and you don't anticipate accepting contributions exceeding \$100 from one source in a calendar year, then you may be exempt from filing campaign finance reports.
- Or,
- If you anticipate accepting contributions, incurring loans, or other obligations exceeding \$1,000 in a calendar year or you plan to accept more than \$100 from a single source, then you should follow the rules and regulations outlined in the "*Campaign Finance and Book Keeping Manual*." This publication is available through your clerk or online at: <http://elections.state.wi.us/>.
- ☐ Implement campaign strategy. (see page 12).
- ☐ **Win the election!**

Nominations and Ballot Placement

Candidates for local public office in Wisconsin get their names on the official ballot in one of two ways – by correctly filing nomination papers with the local clerk or through a caucus. In either case, the candidates need to clarify with the clerk which procedure will be used, and understand and follow these procedures if they want their name to appear on the ballot.

★ Nomination Papers

Candidates for public office in all cities and counties, and in some towns, villages, and school districts use nomination papers to get their names on the ballot. These candidates must ensure that their nomination papers are prepared, circulated, signed, and filed in compliance with statutory and other legal requirements.

In general, the prospective candidate follows these steps:

1. Ascertain the dates for circulating the papers. Papers for the spring election, for example, may not be circulated prior to December 1 and must be filed no later than 5 p.m. on the first Tuesday in January preceding the election. For the fall election, papers may not be circulated prior to April 15 and must be filed by 5 p.m. on June 1.
2. Obtain the correct form, either
 - a. *Nomination Paper for Nonpartisan Office* (GAB169), or
 - b. *Nomination Paper for Partisan Office* (GAB168)Both forms are available on the Government Accountability Board website: <http://gab.wi.gov/> or from the clerk.
3. Next, the candidate calculates the number of signatures needed. This varies, depending on the office and the size of the jurisdiction. Make a sufficient number of copies of the form to accommodate the required number of signatures (10 per form).
4. Begin circulating the papers. If needed or desired, the candidate may recruit circulators who will obtain signatures on the candidate's behalf.
5. Collect appropriate number of signatures. Keep in mind, there is a maximum number of signatures as well as a minimum. Make sure that signers include their address, municipality, and date of signing.
6. Review the completed forms. Make sure you have sufficient number of certifiable signatures. Ensure that the circulator has completed the required information at the bottom of the form.
7. Prior to the statutory deadline, file the completed nomination papers with the appropriate clerk. A *Declaration of Candidacy* (Form GAB162) and a *Campaign Registration Statement* (Form GAB1), if not already filed, should also be filed at this time.



Here are some of the basic rules for electors who sign nomination papers:

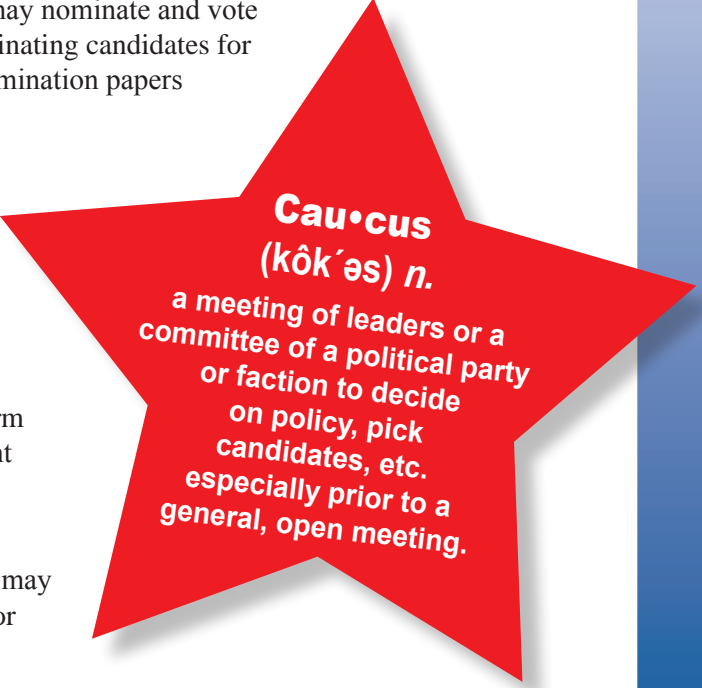
- Each signer must live within the jurisdiction.
- Electors must sign their own name unless unable to do so because of physical disability.
- A person may not sign for his or her spouse, or for any other person, even when they have been given a power of attorney by that person.
- Only one signature per person for the same office is valid.
- A complete address, including municipality of residence for voting purposes, and the street and number, if any, of the residence, (or postal address if it is located in the jurisdiction that the candidate seeks to represent), shall be listed for each signature on the nomination paper.
- A Post Office box address only is not acceptable.
- The date of the signature must be included.
- The elector must be 18 years of age at the time the paper is signed.

★ Nomination of Candidates by Caucus

The caucus is a method that may be used by towns and villages for nominating candidates to be placed on the spring election ballot. The caucus is open to the public, but only qualified electors of the municipality may nominate and vote on candidates. (*Note: A caucus cannot be used for nominating candidates for the office of Town Sanitary District Commissioner. Nomination papers must be used by Town Sanitary Districts.*)

Any person who is a United States citizen, 18 years of age or older, who has resided within the municipality for at least 10 days before the caucus is a qualified elector. The poll list from a previous election can be used as an aid in determining if a person qualified as an elector in the municipality at the last election. Any person whose name does not appear on the poll list can be asked to provide some form of identification that includes the person's name, current address, and if necessary, date of birth.

When the caucus system is used, there is no February primary for the town or village offices. However, there may still be a February primary conducted within the town or village for state, county, or school district candidates.



Cau•cus
(kôk'əs) *n.*
a meeting of leaders or a committee of a political party or faction to decide on policy, pick candidates, etc. especially prior to a general, open meeting.

CAUCUS: When is one held?

Between December 1 and January 1 preceding a spring election, the governing body of any town or village using the caucus system for nominating candidates must decide the date on which the caucus will be held. The caucus must be held no sooner than the first Tuesday in January and no later than the last Tuesday in January. If possible, preference should be given to the last Tuesday in January.

When a caucus is held, the municipal clerk must give proper public notice. This is accomplished by posting a notice in the clerk's office and by publication in a newspaper at least five days before the date of the caucus. This notice must contain the location, date, and time of the caucus. Where a newspaper is not published within a municipality, clerks can meet this publishing requirement by posting the notice of the caucus in at least three locations within the municipality. When posting is used, the notices must be posted no later than five days before the date of the caucus. The notices must be posted in three places within the municipality where they are most likely to be seen by electors.

CAUCUS: What is the procedure for nomination?

Nominations are made separately for each office that will appear on the spring election ballot. This can be done in one of two ways: by taking nominations from the floor, or by conducting a vote by secret ballot.

When nominations are taken from the floor, each nomination must receive a second. After each nomination is made and seconded, the caucus chairperson must ask, “Are there any more nominations?” and hearing none, must announce that, “Nominations are closed.” If nominations are made by conducting a secret ballot, the tellers will distribute a piece of paper to each elector which will serve as a ballot. The electors will be instructed to write in the name of the candidate of his or her nominee for the office. Whether nominations are taken from the floor or by conducting a secret ballot, self nominations are permitted. The ballots will then be collected and tallied by the tellers.

Whichever method is used for making nominations, the names of all persons nominated will be announced by the caucus chairperson. Only those persons nominated will be voted on at the caucus, if voting is necessary.

For those offices where only one person is to be elected and only one or two candidates are nominated, there is no need to conduct a vote. If more than two persons have been nominated, a vote must be conducted at the caucus to reduce the number of candidates to two. If a vote is required, the caucus chairperson will announce the names of all candidates. Each elector at the caucus is entitled to vote for one candidate. The two candidates receiving the highest number of votes are nominated and certified to the municipal clerk by the caucus chairperson and tellers.

Nominations for the offices of town supervisors elected to unnumbered seats, or nominations for the offices of village trustee should be considered together. If more than twice the number of candidates to be elected is nominated, a vote must be conducted to reduce the number of candidates to twice the number of seats to be filled. Each elector at the caucus is entitled to vote for as many candidates as there are seats to be filled at the election. For example, if three village trustees are to be elected, each person can vote for three candidates. The six candidates who receive the most votes at the caucus will be nominated and certified to the municipal clerk by the caucus chairperson and tellers.

Candidates in jurisdiction where the caucus is in place should note that the caucus serves, essentially, as that municipality’s primary. If more than two people are nominated for an office, the vote to reduce the number of candidates to two will be taken during the caucus. Serious candidates will want to ensure that their supporters attend and participate in the caucus.

If any of the nominated candidates are present at the caucus, the municipal clerk may provide them with the written notice of nomination, the *Campaign Registration Statement* (GAB1), and the *Declaration of Candidacy* (GAB162). The candidate could then complete and file the paperwork immediately with the clerk.

If a candidate is not present at the caucus, the written notification, the *Campaign Registration Statement* (GAB1), and the *Declaration of Candidacy* (GAB162) should be delivered to the candidate as soon as possible.

Delivery can be made in person or by mail. **The candidate has five days** from the date of receiving written notification of his or her nomination to file the necessary forms with the clerk.

CAUCUS: How are nominated candidates notified?

As soon as the nominated candidates are certified to the municipal clerk, the clerk is responsible for notifying the candidates, in writing, of their nomination. The clerk must also inform each candidate of the requirement to file a *Campaign Registration Statement* (Form GAB1) and a *Declaration of Candidacy* (Form GAB162).

Candidates for municipal judge must also be informed of the requirement that they must file a Statement of Economic Interests with the State Ethics Board. A copy of the *Campaign Registration Statement* (Form GAB1) and the *Declaration of Candidacy* (Form GAB162) should be provided by the clerk to each nominated candidate.

CAUCUS: What are the qualifications for placing candidates on the ballot?

In order to qualify for ballot placement, each candidate is required to complete and file, no later than five days after receiving a written notice that he or she has been nominated for office, the two forms listed: *Campaign Registration Statement* (Form GAB1); and *Declaration of Candidacy* (Form GAB162).

A candidate for municipal judge must also file a *Statement of Economic Interests* with the State Ethics Board no later than five days after receiving written notification that he or she has been nominated.

If a candidate fails to file any of the required forms within five days after receipt of written notification, the candidate does not qualify for ballot placement and the clerk cannot place the candidate's name on the ballot. When a candidate fails to file the required forms on time, the clerk should treat that failure as a declination to nomination.

No later than the end of the third day following the qualification of candidates, the municipal clerk must conduct a drawing of lots for each office to determine the order in which candidates' names will be placed on the Spring Election ballot.

Notes

Mapping the Campaign

1. **Invite** potential committee members to discuss priority issues and campaign organization during the months before circulating nomination papers. Include a variety of factions who would support you.
2. **Get** a copy of the **election statutes** from your clerk or download Chapters 512 of the Wisconsin State Statutes from the internet at <http://www.legis.state.wi.us/rsb/statutes.html>.
3. **Get a candidate packet** from the Government Accountability Board by calling 608.266.8005 or on the internet at <http://gab.wi.gov/>.
4. If necessary, **circulate** nomination papers. Get as many people involved in circulating papers as possible. Save copies of those filed with the clerk's office in order to be able to contact those who have indicated support. File more than the minimum number of names in case questions arise about the qualification of signers. Nomination papers can get people talking about your candidacy. There is, however, a limit to the number of signatures that can be submitted. This limitation is designed to prevent one candidate from "cornering the market." **It is illegal to solicit nomination signatures on public property.** If soliciting signatures on private property, you are required to attain the approval of the property owner.
5. If necessary, **attend** the appropriate caucus with your supporters and get nominated.
6. **Learn** the "culture of campaigning" in your area. Do local candidates actively campaign in traditional ways, such as door to door, yard signs, attend local events, etc.? Or is campaigning "shunned"? You may choose to run a "quiet" campaign through paid newspaper ads, coffee/socials by invitation in private homes.
7. **Issue** an announcement of your candidacy to the papers, preferably with a picture. A 5 x 7" glossy and a short resume about yourself will be effective.
8. **Develop** consistent visuals such as a logo, slogan, colors, that residents can associate with you quickly and repeatedly. Create tasteful and original campaign literature. All political advertising used in campaigns must carry clearly visible information identifying its source. The phrase "Paid for by" should be followed by the candidate's name and address or the campaign committee and the treasurer's name. **Keep in mind that it is illegal to place any campaign materials on windshields!**
9. **Divide** campaign jobs into a variety of projects. Have on hand assignments of varying degrees of difficulty and time requirements for volunteers to choose from (e.g., neighborhood canvassing, writing campaign literature, circulating nomination papers, giving coffees, thanking contributors, checking on people who might need babysitting or rides to polls, checking on registration). Any work done for a candidate is a commitment to that candidate!



10. **Arrange** for coffees and public appearances (don't forget the local radio talk show) – as many as possible.
11. **Knock** on doors. Door-to-door campaigning is the only way you will meet some of the voters. So, plan on as much of this as you can handle. Prior to going door-to-door, obtain from the county clerk's office a list of voters in your jurisdiction who voted in the most recent election like the one you are participating in (e.g., spring election; fall of a presidential election year; fall of an off-year election). Give priority to speaking with people most likely to vote.
12. **Attention candidate!** Keep your workers' morale from sagging. Accentuate the positive and express your gratitude.
13. **Attention campaign workers!** Keep your candidate's morale at a high level.
14. **Raise** some money. Fund raising is essential. Whether you merely pass the hat or throw an elaborate function, infuse that budget early and solicit funds.
15. **Make** the campaign your own and maintain your ground. Say what you think. Be yourself. Be willing to say you are not informed, if you are not, and say that you will become informed. Watch out for declaring a final opinion on everything.
16. **Check** your speaking habits. Find whatever way works best for you to relax. Focus on the interviewer and the questions, if there is one, but don't avoid eye contact with an audience. The audience will remember your general outlook and poise perhaps more than specific statements you make in your responses.
17. **Be creative** in the way you thank your workers, contributors, and campaign managers. At a minimum send thank you notes. Remember, there is always a next time, win or lose.
18. **Expect** the unexpected.

Source: League of Women Voters of Wisconsin and the Government Accountability Board



Writing and Submitting an Effective Press Release

Most basic of all public relations tools is the press release. When prepared correctly, it is a simple mechanism for informing the media about a newsworthy project or event. Submitting a press release does not guarantee that it will be printed. You may want to consider a paid advertisement to ensure you make the paper. Here are some guidelines for preparing a news release.

Establish relevance: Be sure to emphasize the local relevance in the first sentence and in the headline. Your press release should cover basic information on the five W's (Who, What, Where, When, Why) and then go on to provide additional information on your program – its goals, design, and people involved.

Keep it short: A news release should not exceed two pages or 600 words in length. Beware; editors often shorten articles by cutting from the end of the copy. So, be sure that the most essential information comes first, least essential last. A press release should be simple. Check that all words and names are spelled correctly.

Tell a story by providing an example: Any time you can incorporate a compelling story about a person who has been affected by a program or project, be sure to include it. This is what makes your press release interesting to the readers and, therefore, the editors.

Include your contact information: Every press release should contain your contact information, including phone numbers and email addresses on the top of the page.

Include a release date: Include a release date when the media should print the press release on the top of the page.

Your press release should start out something like this:

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Joe Smith, candidate for Mayor of Electionville (123) 555-1234 jsmith@hotmail.com

RE: Smith is Running for Mayor of Electionville

Mail, Fax, or E-mail?: Be sure to check with your local paper about their preferences. Some prefer fax or mail but most would choose to receive press releases via email. If they get it electronically, they don't have to retype it! Also, send your press release a week or two before you want it to be printed. If you send it too early it may get lost in the shuffle.

Send Images: Include a relevant photo or at least some type of logo or graphic. Photos are the best way to help your news story stand out. Email your photos in a JPEG format at a resolution of 170-200 dpi.

Call your local political reporter: Call your local media and find the contact person for local politics. Send your press release to them, and call to make sure they received it. It will ensure that they are aware of the release and it will improve its chances of getting published.

Other media outlets: Do you have a local radio, TV or cable channel? It may be worth it to include them in your media contact list.

Campaign Finance

Most candidates for local elections are exempt from filing Campaign Finance Reports because their campaign finance activity does not reach the minimum thresholds. If your campaign does not meet the requirements for exemption, follow the rules and regulations outlined in *Campaign Finance and Book Keeping Report*. Copies can be obtained from your clerk or online at <http://elections.state.wi.us>.

A candidate is exempt from filing Campaign Finance Reports if all of the following apply:

1. The candidate anticipates that he/she will not accept contributions, make disbursements, or incur loans and other obligations exceeding \$1,000 in a calendar year.
2. The candidate anticipates that he/she will not accept any contribution or cumulative contributions from a single source exceeding \$100 in a calendar year.
3. The candidate or treasurer signs and dates the request for exemption on the line at item 6 of the *Campaign Registration Statement* (Form GAB1).

The \$100 limit on contributions from a single source does not apply to contributions from a candidate's personal funds for his or her campaign, if the candidate's contributions total \$1,000 or less in a calendar year. When exempt, the candidate is not required to file any *Campaign Finance Reports*. However, the candidate is required to keep financial records adequate to meet the requirements of the campaign finance law.

If a decision is made at a later date to exceed the \$1,000 limit on contributions and disbursements, or to raise more than \$100 from a single source for the campaign during a calendar year, the candidate must amend the registration statement. The candidate is required to file *Campaign Finance Reports* beginning with the next regular report. The first report must cover all financial activity from the time of registration or from the date of the last financial report before going on exemption.

Political candidates filing an *Oath for Committees and Individuals Making Independent Disbursements* (Form GAB6) are not eligible for exemption.

☆ Financial Reporting

Regardless of its status, the candidate is required to maintain financial records adequate to meet the requirements of the campaign finance law.

Contributions are restricted by the campaign finance law. Limits vary with the office being pursued, so be sure to check out the allowed contribution level for a particular office of interest.

Some prohibited contributions include:

1. Anonymous contributions over \$10.
2. Cash contributions over \$50 (There must be a check, money order, or credit slip to identify the contributor.)
3. Contributions listed in a name other than that of the actual contributor.
4. Corporate or cooperative contributions.
5. Contributions in excess of the limits set by law.



Campaign finance reports must be filed by all registrants who are not exempt from filing reports until termination of their registration. These reports must be filed with the appropriate filing officer when due. The *Campaign Finance Report* (Form GAB2) is a 10-page form provided to candidates for state office by the Government Accountability Board and to candidates for local office by the local filing officer.

☆ Campaign Finance Registration Requirements

Who is required to register?

Under Wisconsin campaign finance law, a candidate for election to any public office must register with the appropriate filing officer. Candidates for any local elective office in a county, city, town, village, or school district must register with the clerk of the county, city, town, village, or school district as soon as the individual decides to become a candidate. (Candidates for state office must register with the Government Accountability Board in Madison as soon as the individual decides to become a candidate.)

A candidate must file a *Campaign Registration Statement* (GAB1) at the point he or she forms the intent to become a candidate and before circulating nomination papers, receiving contributions, or spending any money on the campaign. Registration statements can be obtained from any filing officer. The minimum amount of money needed to open an account can be deposited at a financial institution and a post office box can be rented before registration. However, these expenses must be reported on the first campaign finance report.

After filing the registration statement, a candidate may begin receiving and disbursing campaign funds. The campaign's financial activities must be reported to the filing officer on *Campaign Finance Reports* (GAB2). These reports will disclose information on the receipts, expenditures, and incurred obligations of the campaign.

Completing a Campaign Registration Statement (Form GAB1)

Seven information items are required on a *Campaign Registration Statement Form* (GAB1):

1. Candidate and Candidate Committee information

This section must be completed by all candidates and candidate committees. It contains the information identifying the candidate and the committee, office sought, and date of the election. Political action committees, political party committees, recall committees, and political groups (referendum) do not complete this section.

There are two types of candidate campaign committees: a personal campaign committee and a support committee. A personal campaign committee is organized by the candidate in support of the candidate's declared candidacy for a specific office. A support committee is organized on behalf of the possible candidacy of a person with that person's consent. A candidate with a personal campaign committee cannot authorize a support committee. A person who is supported by a support committee must adopt the support committee as his/her personal campaign committee when the person becomes a candidate. Either type of committee acts in support of, and on behalf of the candidate and is bound by the same rules as candidates, including registration, financial reporting, and laws governing campaign practices.

2. Political Committee information

This section must be completed by political committees other than candidate committees. The political committee must provide the name, address, and telephone number of the committee, along with the name of the sponsoring organization, if any, and any acronym used by the committee. The type of committee is indicated by checking the applicable boxes. Candidate committees do not fill in this section.

3. Campaign treasurer

There must be a treasurer for the candidate or political committee listed in Item 3. The candidate can serve as the campaign treasurer. It is important that the treasurer's name, complete address, and telephone numbers be provided on the registration statement and be kept current. All notices and forms for campaign finance reports will be sent to this person at the address given in this section.

4. Principal officers of the committee and other custodians of books and accounts

If the committee has other officers besides the treasurer, they should be listed in Item 4. A non-partisan candidate for county or municipal office, or independent candidate, may authorize certain committee members or other officers to fill a vacancy in nomination due to the candidate's death. These individual's should be indicated in item 4 with an asterisk (*).

5. Depository information

All registrants must have a single campaign depository account in which all contributions are deposited and from which all disbursements are made. The campaign account number is written on the form if the registrant maintains additional accounts for investment purposes, including certificates of deposit or a safe deposit box, the name of the financial institution and account numbers should be listed on a separate sheet of paper and attached to the registration statement.

Candidates can use a personal account if they are both:

1. Serving as their own treasurer, and
2. Exempt from filing campaign finance reports. If campaign finance activity does not exceed a minimum threshold, the candidate does not have to file campaign finance reports. The thresholds are listed under "EXEMPTION FROM FILING CAMPAIGN FINANCE REPORTS."

6. Certification

The candidate and committee treasurer must sign the original registration statement of a personal campaign committee or a support committee certifying that the information is true, correct, and complete and the committee is the only committee authorized to act on the candidate's behalf.

7. Exemption from Filing Campaign Finance Reports

Registrants who are eligible for an exemption from filing campaign finance reports should complete this section.

Amending a Registration Statement

When the information reported on the registration statement changes after the initial filing, the statement must be amended within 10 days of the change. The best procedure is to complete a new registration statement and check the "Yes" box for an amendment located near the top of the form. Any amendments to the original campaign registration statement may be signed by the treasurer, the candidate, or the person who succeeds to the position of treasurer, if the treasurer is replaced.

Penalty for not filing a Registration Statement

Failure to file the original registration statement by the deadline for filing nomination papers prevents a candidate's name from appearing on the ballot. If the registration statement or amendment is not filed before engaging in campaign activity, the registrant may be subject to a fine.



As you consider running for public elected office, know that efforts are underway to create an atmosphere in our community that stresses civil discourse. By elevating our level of communication and avoiding personal attacks and general stubbornness, we can avoid unhealthy debate. This will lead to a more effective democracy, and help maintain our sense of community by increasing civic participation.

Speak Your Peace, citizen-led campaign urges residents of the south Wood County area to communicate in a respectful and effective way. It is not a campaign to end disagreements. It is a campaign to improve public discourse using nine “Tools of Civility” to foster effective communication.

Nine Tools of Civility

1. Pay Attention

Be aware and attend to the world and the people around you.

- ☐ Be informed about what is occurring in our community
- ☐ Focus on the issue - on what the person is saying
- ☐ Consider the whole picture; issues are connected
- ☐ Open your mind to new perspectives; strive for objectivity

2. Listen

Focus on others in order to better understand their points of view.

- ☐ Seek to understand; hear what is said
- ☐ Ask effective questions
- ☐ Respect the person and his/her view through your words and body language
- ☐ Give thoughtful attention; avoid distractions such as: your emotion, multi-tasking, or formulating a response instead of listening

3. Be Inclusive

Welcome all groups of citizens working for the greater good of the community.

- ☐ Know the community system in order to be inclusive (social, economic, environmental, technical, etc.)
- ☐ Intentionally and sincerely invite diverse perspectives
- ☐ Seek participation; take responsibility; include yourself!
- ☐ Use common language; avoid jargon

4. Don't Gossip

And don't accept when others choose to do so.

- ☐ Go to the source for the facts; validate the information
- ☐ Communicate with respect and a positive intent; own what you say; be accountable
- ☐ Model integrity and mutual respect; set a good example for others
- ☐ Honor those who are not present

5. Show Respect

Honor other people and their opinions, especially in the midst of a disagreement.

- ☐ Value the person; appreciate his/her contributions, experiences, passion, culture, norms and values
- ☐ Use questions to clarify
- ☐ Value ideas that are brought to the table
- ☐ Demonstrate positive body language

6. Seek Common Ground

Look for opportunities to agree; don't contradict just to do so.

- ☐ Rise above emotions; focus on the issues
- ☐ Build relationships; make a connection
- ☐ Work toward mutual trust

7. Repair Damaged Relationships

Be sincere; apologize and forgive.

- ☐ Take responsibility for your actions and words
- ☐ Accept an apology
- ☐ Practice forgiveness; let go of the past

8. Use Constructive Language

Be mindful of the words you choose.

- ☐ Address conflict with the intent of resolution
- ☐ When disagreeing, stick to the issues and don't make a personal attack
- ☐ Learn from others' perspectives and feedback

9. Take Responsibility

Practice accountability in language and actions.

- ☐ Take ownership; use "I" statements
- ☐ Don't shift responsibility and blame onto others
- ☐ Be trustworthy
- ☐ Tell the truth



To find out more, visit www.SpeakYourPeaceSWC.org. Become a fan of SYP on Facebook: www.facebook.com/speakyourpeaceswc.

*Speak Your Peace. Owned by the community.
Supported by Incourage Community Foundation.*

Additional Thoughts and Resources

If you decide not to run, there are many other ways to get involved.

- Most people don't think to run for elected office until they are asked to run. Find a great candidate and help them get elected.
- Get involved in a local government committee.
- Make a campaign contribution.
- Get involved with a political party.
- Get informed on the issues and share your thoughts and feelings with your local elected official.
- **VOTE!**

Web Links:

League of Wisconsin Municipalities: www.lwm-info.org
UW Extension-Local Government Center: www.uwex.edu/lgc
Wisconsin Counties Association: www.wicounties.org
Wisconsin Government Accountability Board: www.gab.wi.gov
Wisconsin League of Women Voters: www.lwvwi.org
Wisconsin League of Women Voters - Voter Information: www.vote411.org
Wisconsin Municipal Clerks Association: www.wisclerks.org
Wisconsin State Statutes: www.legis.wisconsin.gov/rsb/stats.html
Wisconsin Towns Association: www.wisctowns.com
Wisconsin Vote: www.wisconsinvote.org

Books:

How to Run for Local Office: A complete guide for Winning a Local Election, Revised 2nd Edition.
By Robert J. Thomas, R & T Enterprise Inc., 2008

How to Win a Local Election, Third Edition.
By Lawrence Grey, Evans, M. & Company, Inc., 2007.

The Campaign Manager: Running and Winning Local Elections, Fourth Edition.
By Catherine Shaw Westview Press, 2009.

The Political Campaign Desk Reference: A Guide for Campaign Managers and Candidates Running for Elected Office.
By Michael McNamara, Outskirts Press, Inc., 2008.

Session Sponsors:

- **Wood County UW-Extension Office** - Phone: 715.421.8440;
Website: <http://wood.uwex.edu>
- **League of Women Voters of Wisconsin Rapids Area** -
Website: www.lwvwi.org
- **Encourage Community Foundation**
Phone: 715.423.3863; Website: www.encouragecf.org

