



# Wisconsin Elections Commission

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## Media Advisory: Covering the January 7 Nomination Paper Deadline

As the new year begins, the 2025 Spring Election is quickly approaching. Candidates have until Tuesday, January 7 at 5 p.m. to file nomination papers and other materials to get on the ballot for the February 18 Spring Primary and/or April 1 Spring Election.

During a January 2 public meeting of the Wisconsin Elections Commission, Commissioners established a schedule for the Commission's review of Spring Election ballot access materials.

Per state law, nonpartisan candidates in contests scheduled for the April 1, 2025 Spring Election may circulate nomination papers from December 1, 2024, through January 7, 2025. State law and administrative code then allow for challenges to candidate materials to be filed, which can determine whether the candidate is granted ballot access.

The challenge process needs to be completed on an expedited basis but allows for a written challenge from any challenger – and a written response from the challenged candidate – to be filed with the Commission during that timeframe. The Commission also voted to allow for a final rebuttal filing from challengers this cycle.

Media members, candidates, political parties, and other interested individuals should take note of the following schedule, which concludes with a public meeting of the Commission on January 14, 2025. There is a particularly short turnaround for the final written rebuttal, if a challenger opts to submit one.

- **Tuesday, January 7, 2025, at 5 p.m.** – Nomination paper filing deadline for Spring Election candidates.
- **Wednesday, January 8, 2025** – First day a challenge can be filed against candidate nomination papers.
- **Friday, January 10, 2025, at 4:30 p.m.** – Last day a challenge can be filed against candidate nomination papers.
- **Monday, January 13, 2025, at 4:30 p.m.** – Last day a response can be filed to a challenge.
- **Monday, January 13, 2025, at 4:30 p.m.** – Last day for a challenger or challenged candidate to notify the Commission of intent to appear and present at the ballot access meeting on January 14, 2025.
- **Tuesday, January 14, 2025, at 9:00 a.m.** – Deadline for rebuttal filings from a challenger (optional).
- **Tuesday, January 14, 2025, at 11:00 a.m.** – Commission Ballot Access meeting to decide challenges to spring election candidates who file nomination papers.

*Wisconsin Elections Commissioners*

Ann S. Jacobs, chair | Marge Bostelmann | Don M. Millis | Carrie Riepl | Robert Spindell | Mark L. Thomsen

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Administrator  
Meagan Wolfe

## The Necessary Paperwork

To get on the ballot, candidates for state office must file four documents with two different state agencies:

- Campaign finance registration statement (ETHCF-1) with the Wisconsin Ethics Commission
- Declaration of Candidacy form (EL-162) with the Wisconsin Elections Commission
- Nomination Paper for Nonpartisan Office (EL-169) with the Wisconsin Elections Commission
- Statement of Economic Interests (SEI) with the Ethics Commission (due by 4:30 p.m. Friday, Jan. 10).

For more information about steps candidates must take to get on the ballot, the Elections Commission publishes a checklist for state candidates, which can also be helpful for reporters. The checklist for state candidates is available here: <https://elections.wi.gov/candidates/state-candidates>

Select the “non-partisan” tab.

## Who Filed?

To find out who has filed paperwork to get on the ballot for the fall election, visit the WEC’s “Wisconsin Elections” page: <https://elections.wi.gov/elections>

There are several attachments available in the “Spring Election 2025” tile on that page. Of particular interest to reporters are the “Candidates Tracking By Office as of 1\_X\_25.pdf” and Notification of Noncandidacy List\_Final.pdf.

The most helpful document for most journalists will be the “Candidates Tracking By Office,” which also has the date and time it was updated in its title. The document is arranged in several columns: the candidate’s name and address, date the campaign registration statement was filed, date the declaration of candidacy was filed, date the statement of economic interests was filed, date the nomination papers were filed, number of valid signatures recommended for approval, and the pending, unofficial result of staff review.

To get his or her name on this list of candidates, a state candidate must have filed an ETHCF-1 Campaign Finance Registration Statement with the Ethics Commission, which can be viewed at <http://cfis.wi.gov> by clicking on “View Registrants” and searching for the candidate by name, committee ID or office. Not everyone who files an ETHCF-1 follows through with filing nomination papers to get on the ballot.

If there is a date in a column on the candidate tracker, it means the candidate filed that paperwork (Declaration of Candidacy, SEI, Nomination Papers) on that date. If there is no date, that paperwork had not yet been filed as of the time that version of the candidate tracker was created.

The column “valid signatures” has the number of valid signatures recommended after the Elections Commission staff review. If a candidate has filed petitions and the number does not appear, it means staff is still reviewing the petitions. If the “Ballot Status” column says Pending, staff is still reviewing the petitions or is waiting for other paperwork such as the SEI. If it says Approved, staff is recommending approval to the Elections Commission, which will make a final decision at its meeting on Jan. 14. Decisions on ballot status are not official until the six WEC members meet on Jan. 14 to vote to approve or deny candidates.

Candidates submitting the necessary nomination paperwork in a compliant manner, and possibly overcoming a challenge to that paperwork, are granted ballot access and will have their names printed on the respective ballots for voters to select on Election Day.

More information about the requirements for getting on the ballot can be found at the following location: <https://elections.wi.gov/candidates/getting-ballot>. Additional information can be found on the webpages for local, state, and federal candidate requirements, respectively. Guidelines on the ballot access challenge process are available here: <https://elections.wi.gov/resources/quick-reference-topics/filing-challenges-nomination-papers>.

The Commission's Common Nomination Paper Challenges Manual can be found here:  
<https://elections.wi.gov/resources/manuals/common-nomination-paper-challenges-manual>.

## Local Candidates

Candidates for nonpartisan municipal offices, such as city council, file paperwork with the municipal clerk or City of Milwaukee Election Commission. You can find a directory of municipal clerks here:

<http://elections.wi.gov/clerks/directory>

## How Many Signatures?

Candidates for Justice of the Supreme Court and for statewide Constitutional offices, such as state superintendent, must file at least 2,000 valid signatures. Candidates for Court of Appeals judge and circuit court judge in Milwaukee County must file at least 1,000 valid signatures. Candidates for circuit court judge in all other counties must file at least 200 valid signatures.

## Other Deadlines

- The deadline for filings is 5 p.m. on Jan. 7. If an incumbent officeholder does not file nomination papers and a declaration of candidacy form by the filing deadline, and also did not file a notification of noncandidacy form by Dec. 27, 2024, the filing deadline for all other candidates for that office is extended by 72 hours.
- Paperwork required to be filed by the Jan. 7 deadline are the Campaign Registration Statement, Declaration of Candidacy, and Nomination Paper for Nonpartisan Office. This paperwork must be filed in person – faxes and emails are not acceptable.
- The Statements of Economic Interests must be filed by 4:30 p.m. on Jan. 10. The SEI may be filed electronically with the Ethics Commission.

## Access to Candidates' Paperwork

- Members of the public and the media may request a copy of candidates' nomination papers for free by making a request at the WEC's Badger Voters website: <https://badgervoters.wi.gov/>. On the home page, select "Get Started." Then, select "Nomination Data" and choose the candidate's name from the drop-down menu.
- Copies of the ETHCF-1 (campaign finance registration statement) are available on the Ethics Commission's Campaign Finance Information System website at <http://cfis.wi.gov>.
- Candidates' Statements of Economic Interests are only available by filling out a request form on the Ethics Commission's SEI website: <https://sei.wi.gov>.

Copies of any challenges, responses, and rebuttals will be posted on the WEC's Badger Voters website as filings are submitted, and on the webpage for the Jan. 14 ballot access meeting by time of the meeting. When they become available, staff reports and recommendations on challenges will also be posted online.

Interested parties, candidates, and individuals may contact Commission staff with any procedural questions about ballot access challenges at (608) 266-8005 or [elections@wi.gov](mailto:elections@wi.gov). Candidates and potential challengers should also notify the Commission of the most desired method of communication and provide relevant contact information, to ensure timely communication or transmission of filings.