

So, You're Running for Office

What You Need to Know



Candidate's Responsibilities

In order to comply with the provisions of the Campaign Reports and Finances Law, each candidate must:

1. Appoint a treasurer no later than 10 days after becoming a candidate. The candidate may serve as his/her own treasurer. Until a treasurer is appointed, contributions cannot be received and expenditures cannot be made by or on behalf of the candidate. A candidate may have only one treasurer.
2. Register the candidate's name and address and the name and address of the treasurer with the City Clerk no later than 10 days after appointing the treasurer.
3. If the candidate appoints a political committee, appoint a treasurer of the committee no later than 10 days after appointing the committee, and before accepting contributions, making expenditures or incurring obligations. If a treasurer was previously appointed, he/she shall serve as the committee treasurer.
4. No later than 10 days after appointing a political committee, register the name of the committee, the name and address of the committee's treasurer, the name of the candidate who authorized the committee, and the names and addresses of the committee officers with the City Clerk.
5. Report to the treasurer all contributions received and expenditures made within 5 days of receiving a contribution or making an expenditure. Personal funds of the candidate used for campaign purposes must be reported as contributions.
6. If the treasurer resigns, send a written statement to the City Clerk of the resignation. Serve as treasurer from the date of the vacancy until the appointment of a successor.
7. Check with the treasurer to make sure campaign finance reports are filed on time. The candidate and the treasurer are jointly responsible for the timely and accurate filing of each required report.
8. Report any new campaign appointments within 10 days of the date of the appointment.
9. Sign campaign finance reports.

Political Signs and Political Advertising

Title 23 MRSA sec. 1913-A (1) (L)), states that Temporary signs placed within the public right-of-way for a maximum of 12 weeks per calendar year. A temporary sign may not be placed within 30 feet of another temporary sign bearing the same or substantially the same message. A temporary sign may not exceed 4 feet by 8 feet in size. A sign under this paragraph must include or be marked with the name and address of the individual, entity or organization that placed the sign within the public right-of-way and the date the sign was erected within the public right-of-way.

The City ordinance on signs also specifically exempts political signs in these locations for this time period. The right of way includes esplanades between the sidewalk and the street, the Franklin Arterial esplanade and the areas on the public park side of a sidewalk or roadway. In some cases a small park may be surrounded by roads.

The Cities sign ordinance cited above prohibits political signs on the other public property, including the lawn area of fire stations, for example if there is a grassy esplanade between the sidewalk and the street in front of a fire station or other public building then any and all political signs can go there for 42 days as long as they don't create a public safety risk, notably blocking the vision of a driver.

No political signs can be attached to a public building.

Neither the State Law nor our City Ordinances limit the size of political signs, however, the location of large signs (I have seen 4'X8" signs in some elections) can and should be limited by public safety concerns.

No political signs can be on public property within a 250 foot radius around City Hall once absentee voting has started during regular office hours. This includes rallies, press conferences, any and all advertising for candidates or questions appearing on the ballot. Private property at any distance is exempt; private property owners may display influencing or advertising materials.

If someone places a political sign in an inappropriate location on public property please contact the City Clerk's office with the information needed for the Clerk to ask the candidate to remove their sign.

All signs, handouts, and other political advertising must clearly show a **disclosure statement** regarding who paid for and authorized the expenditure under Title 21-A 1012. Violations of this section may result in a report to the Ethics Commission and possible fines.

Candidates at the Polls

By law, Candidates may be in attendance at the polling places on Election Day.

Candidates may greet the voters, as they are coming into the polling place, and introduce themselves by name only. No reference may be made to the fact that they are on the ballot or that they would appreciate the voter casting his/her vote for them. If it is cold and space allows, the Warden may allow candidates to be inside the polling place, provided that they do not impede the passage of the voters to the check in table and as long as the peace and quiet of the polling place is not disrupted by their presence. A friend of a candidate can represent the candidate at a polling location, however they cannot, if asked, give details or specifics of what office or seat the candidate is running for

No pins, buttons, nametags or political clothing may be worn within Two Hundred Fifty (250) feet of the entrance of the polling place.

No palm cards or other advertising may be given out within Two Hundred Fifty (250) feet of the entrance of the polling place.

No stickers may be used in any election other than the June Primary, and stickers can only be given to voters outside the Two Hundred Fifty (250) foot restricted area.

Poll Watchers

- Should avoid parking near buildings and leave those spaces for voters.
- Up to Warden to situate in the polling place.
- May not go behind the ropes
- Spectators only
- May not interfere with voters
- May not try to influence voters
- If a candidate, can say their name but not refer to their candidacy in current or future elections.
- May introduce themselves as the friend of “so and so” but may not explain that “so and so” is on the ballot.
- May not talk to election personnel, except to ask questions of the warden
- May not challenge process
- May challenge voter (must follow 21-A requirements using proper form)
- Shall not act in any way that is disruptive to the election process such as carrying on loud conversations with each other or voters, or going in and out of the building
- Do not have use of the phone or other equipment in the building
- Must remain at least six (6) feet away from booths and ballot box at all times. Election is not over in the district polling place until the election personnel have packed up all materials and leave the building with them.
- Should let the warden know ahead of time if there is anything special they want to see or hear or know about when it takes place, i.e. processing of absentee ballots

Petitioner Regulations City of Portland

Polls Open at 7:00 A.M. and close at 8:00 P.M.

We provide tables and chairs; do not bring your own.

You might want to bring seat cushions.

Not all polling places can accommodate many petitioners. City Clerk's office can tell you where the larger polling places are located.

Space is given on a first come-first served basis.

Only one person for each petition at a time in the polling place.

You may have a sign as wide as your chair draped over the front of the table, bring your own tape.

Signs may not refer to any question on the current ballots.

You may not approach the voters on their way in to vote.

You may not yell to the voters to get their attention.

You should introduce yourself to the Warden when you arrive.

You cannot leave your petition unattended, even to go to the rest room.

You must have your signature, as circulator, notarized before bringing the papers to the City or State. The City Clerk's office does not provide notary service.

No cell phones are allowed in the polling place except for Staff or emergency personnel in line to vote.

You may not hand out anything pertaining to the current election to the voters within 250 feet of the polling place