

Candidate Dos and Don'ts

A nickname may be used on the ballot if it does not exceed 15 letters, does not imply professional or social status, is a derivative of your given name properly acquired or bears no relation to your given name but it is used in good faith.

It is permissible for a candidate to be stationed outside the polling place but within the above stated 200 foot area, greet voters and solicit votes, provided there are no complaints by voters to the managers regarding this activity, or as long as in the managers judgment there is no disruption of the orderly election process. Candidates may not display or distribute campaign literature within this 200 foot area. A candidate may wear a badge no larger than 4 ¼"x 4 ¼" within 200 feet of the entrance to the polling place. This label may contain the candidate's name and office sought.

The candidate may enter the polling place, but the candidate's badge must be removed before entering (*Section 7-25-180 (b)*). A candidate may not actively campaign inside the polling place. Candidates and poll watchers should be permitted to look at the voter registration list in the polling place, provided that they do not interfere with the orderly conduct of the election and no one is waiting in line to vote.

A candidate or member of a candidate's paid campaign staff, including volunteers reimbursed for time expended on campaign activity, may not request an absentee ballot application for any person unless that person is a member of their immediate family.

It is unlawful for any person to procure votes in an election by threat, intimidation, coercion, mistreatment, or abuse; or by the payment, delivery, or promise of money or other article of value.

Placing posters on telephone/utility poles may be considered destruction of private property. Also, the staples and nails left in the poles are very dangerous for the workers who must climb these poles during an emergency. Utility companies ask candidates to not place signs on these poles.

http://www.scvotes.org/candidate_information

All candidates, except President, seeking a political party's nomination to run in a general or special election must file a [Statement of Intention of Candidacy \(SIC\) form](#) with the appropriate party official during the appropriate filing period. [Click here for information on Filing for President.](#)

Candidates must also file a Statement of Economic Interest (SEI) form with the State Ethics Commission. This must be done electronically on the [State Ethics Commission website](#). A

copy of the SEI receipt, or other proof of filing, is required to be submitted with your SIC form at the time of filing. Candidates may also be required to make Campaign Disclosure reports. Visit the State Ethics Commission website for more information.

Candidates for federal office, statewide office, and solicitor must file with the state executive committee of the political party of the candidate's choice. Candidates for State Senate, State House of Representatives, countywide office, and less-than-countywide office must file with the executive committee of the county political party in the candidate's county of residence.

The filing period for the General Election opens at noon on March 16th of the election year and closes at noon on March 30th of the election year.

Names of candidates who fail to file the proper forms during the appropriate filing period will not appear on the ballot.

[Contact the appropriate political party](#) for specific information regarding filing.

If only one candidate files for a particular office with a particular party, that candidate becomes the party's nominee. When more than one candidate files for a particular office with a particular party, the nominee is chosen by primary or convention.

The Democratic and Republican parties nominate candidates by primary. Primaries to nominate candidates for the General Election are held on the second Tuesday in June. Candidates must receive a majority of votes to be nominated. If no candidate receives a majority of votes for a particular office, a primary runoff between the top two candidates is held two weeks later. Primaries and runoffs are conducted by the State and county election commissions.

The Constitution, Green, Independence, Labor, Libertarian, United Citizens, and Working Families parties nominate candidates by convention. Conventions are conducted by the parties. [Contact the appropriate party](#) for more information regarding conventions.

A candidate may be nominated by more than one political party. Such candidates are commonly referred to as "fusion candidates." Click here for [information regarding candidates representing more than one party](#).

Names of candidates who were defeated in a political party primary or convention may not appear on the ensuing general or special election ballot (S.C. Code of Laws Section 7-11-10).

Special Elections

Special elections are non-scheduled elections held at various times to fill vacancies created by death, resignation or removal from office.

The filing period for special elections opens at noon on the third Friday after the vacancy occurs and closes at noon, 10 days later.

If necessary, a primary is held on the 11th Tuesday after the vacancy occurs. If necessary, a primary runoff is held on the 13th Tuesday after the vacancy occurs. The special election is held on the 18th Tuesday after the vacancy occurs.

Partisan Municipal Elections

Filing rules for partisan municipal elections vary. Check with your local party or municipal or county election commission for specific requirements.

Candidate Qualifications

No person may be popularly elected to and serve in any office in the State unless he is registered to vote in the geographical area represented by the office (S.C. Constitution, Article VI, Section 1).

A person convicted of a felony or an offense against the election laws is not qualified to file for or hold office, unless it has been fifteen years since the completion of the sentence for the crime or unless the person has been pardoned (S.C. Constitution, Article VI, Section 1).

Candidate's qualifications for all offices, except SC Senate and SC House of Representatives, are determined at the time of the election and not at the time of filing or nomination.

Qualifications for Senate and House are determined at the time of filing.

Qualifications for municipal offices may vary by ordinance. Check with your municipal or county election commission for specific qualifications.

Some individuals may be restricted from running for public office by the federal Hatch Act. The Act applies to federal employees and others receiving federal funds and restricts their participation in campaigns for partisan offices. For detailed information regarding the Hatch Act, visit the [website of the U.S. Office of Special Counsel](#).

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR COUNTY OFFICES:

Office	Minimum Age	Residency Requirement	Registered Voter	Term of Office	Consecutive Terms	Special Qualifications/Notes
Council	18	Must be a resident of the county and/or district at the time of the	Yes	4 years/ 2years	Indefinite	Term is for 2 years in the following counties: Anderson, Edgefield, Orangeburg and York

		election				
Treasurer	18	Must be a resident of the county at the time of the election	Yes	4 years	Indefinite	Treasurer is appointed in the following counties: Greenwood & York
Auditor	18	Must be a resident of the county at the time of the election	Yes	4 years	Indefinite	Auditor is appointed in the following counties: Greenwood & York
Clerk of Court	18	Must be a resident of the county at the time of the election	Yes	4 years	Indefinite	
Coroner	21	Must be a resident of the county for at least 1 year immediately preceding the date of the election. Must be a U.S. citizen	Yes	4 years	Indefinite	
Probate Judge	21	Must be a resident of the county at the time of the election	Yes	4 years	Indefinite	S.C. Code of Laws Section 14-23-1040 includes an education/experience requirement for Probate Judge. (Act 678 of 1990) However, the U.S. Department of Justice objected to the requirement, and the act was never precleared and is therefore unenforceable.
Sheriff	21	Must be a resident of the county for at least 1 year immediately preceding the date of the election. Must be a U.S. citizen.	Yes	4 years	Indefinite	* See below for complete qualifications
Register of Deeds	18	Must be a resident of the county at the time of the election	Yes	4 years	Indefinite	
School Board	18	Must be a resident of the county and/or district at the	Yes	4 years/ 3 years/	Indefinite	Contact the SC School Board Association for more information

		time of the election		2 years		
Soil & Water Conservation District Commissioner	18	Must be a resident of the county and/or district at the time of the election	Yes	4 years	Indefinite	

***Candidates for Sheriff must meet the following qualifications** (S.C. Code of Laws 23-11-110): a) Have a high school diploma & 5 years experience as a certified law enf. officer; or 2 year associate degree & 3 years experience as a certified law enf. officer; or 4 year bachelors degree & 1 year experience as a certified law enf. officer; or served as a summary court judge for at least 10 years. Must not have pled guilty or been convicted of a felony in this state or in any other state or pled guilty or been convicted of driving under suspension of a license or driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol within the past 10 years. Candidates must be fingerprinted and have SLED make a search of local, state and federal fingerprint files for any criminal record. Fingerprints are to be taken under the direction of any law enforcement agency and must be made available to SLED no later than 130 days prior to the General Election. The results of the records search are to be filed with the county executive committee of the person's political party. A person seeking nomination by petition must file the results with the county election commission in the county of his residence. Candidates must file a sworn affidavit containing certain information and affirming that the person meets all qualifications as required. Affidavits can be obtained from political parties or the local county election commission.

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR STATE/FEDERAL OFFICES:

Office	Minimum Age	State Resident	US Citizen	Registered Voter	Term of Office	Consecutive Terms	Special Qualifications/Notes
US Senate	30	No time limit	9 years	Yes	6 years	Indefinite	
US House of Representatives	25	No time limit	7 years	Yes	2 years	Indefinite	
Governor	30	5 years	5 years	Yes	4 years	2	
Lieutenant Governor	30	5 years	5 years	Yes	4 years	2	
Secretary of State	18	No time limit	No time limit	Yes	4 years	Indefinite	
State Treasurer	18	No time	No time	Yes	4	Indefinite	

		limit	limit		years		
Attorney General	18	No time limit	No time limit	Yes	4 years	Indefinite	
Comptroller General	18	No time limit	No time limit	Yes	4 years	Indefinite	
State Superintendent of Education	18	No time limit	No time limit	Yes	4 years	Indefinite	
Adjutant General	18	No time limit	No time limit	Yes	4 years	Indefinite	
Agriculture Commissioner	18	No time limit	No time limit	Yes	4 years	Indefinite	
SC Senate	25	No time limit	No time limit	Yes	4 years	Indefinite	Must be a legal resident of the district at the time of filing
SC House of Representatives	21	No time limit	No time limit	Yes	2 years	Indefinite	Must be a legal resident of the district at the time of filing
Solicitors	18	No time limit	No time limit	Yes	4 years	Indefinite	Must be legal resident of circuit 30 days prior to the election

Poll Watchers

A poll watcher is someone who is appointed by a candidate or a political party to observe the election day procedures in a precinct. The poll managers of the polling place will designate a place where watchers can remain throughout election day. Conversations between watchers and voters are not permitted within the polling place. Watchers will not be permitted to interfere with the orderly conduct of the election or influence any voter in the casting this ballot.

Qualifications

- Must be a qualified voter in the county.
- Present the poll manager with a letter signed by the candidate or by an appropriate party official stating that he/she is certified to act as a watcher in that precinct.
- Wear a badge not to exceed 4 ¼" x 4 ¼", specifying the name of the candidate or party he/she represents.

Appointment

- In a primary election each candidate may appoint one watcher for any polling place where his/her name is on the ballot.
- In a general election each non-partisan, petition or announced write-in candidate may appoint one watcher for any polling place where his/her name is on the ballot.
- All candidates of the same party are jointly represented at any one voting place by no more than two watchers for each 1000 registered voters at the polling place.