Political Party Manual

Published by

Elections Division
255 Capitol St NE, Suite 501
Salem, OR 97310-0722

☎ 503 986 1518
fax 503 373 7414
tty 1 800 735 2900
www.oregonvotes.gov

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Using This Manual

This manual contains information on:

- → qualifying as a major political party;
- → forming a minor political party and maintaining ballot access;
- → filing organizational documents; and
- → nominating candidates for partisan office.

This manual does not explain or interpret any rule adopted by a recognized major or minor political party. For information about existing rules contact the political party directly. Contact information for each recognized political party is available at **www.oregonvotes.gov**.

Icons

The following icons are used in this manual to emphasize information:

alert icon
indicates alert; warning; attention needed

form icon
indicates a reference to a form

deadline icon
indicates a deadline

info icon
indicates additional information

example icon
indicates a detailed example of a concept, process or form

search icon
indicates information located elsewhere

Assistance

If you have questions about the material covered in this manual or need further assistance, please contact:

Elections Division
255 Capitol St NE, Suite 501
Salem, OR 97310

elections.sos@oregon.gov
www.oregonvotes.gov

503 986 1518
fax 503 373 7414

1 866 673 8683
se habla español

tty 1 800 735 2900
for the hearing impaired

Getting Started

A political party is a group of people with a shared philosophy and common goals organized to influence public policy. In Oregon, political parties are formed by petition. Once formed, political parties are classified as either major or minor based on the number of voters who are registered as members of the party. Each party is able to nominate candidates for any federal, state or county partisan office as long as the party is established within the candidate's district and has maintained ballot access.

Submitting Forms and Documents

Any signature sheet required to be filed must be personally delivered by the chief sponsor or an authorized agent or mailed to the Elections Division.

With the exception of petition signature sheets, completed and signed forms or documents may be:

→ scanned and emailed to the Elections Division at **irrlistnotifier.sos@oregon.gov**

→ faxed to 503 373 7414

→ mailed or personally delivered to 255 Capitol St NE, Ste 501, Salem, OR 97310

The Elections Division will distribute all notifications and other correspondence by email unless otherwise notified by the chief sponsor or party officers.

Major Political Party

Qualification

ORS 248.006

A group of affiliated voters becomes a major political party and is qualified to nominate candidates at the primary election when at least 5% of the voters eligible to vote at the last general election are registered as members of the party.

Status Determination

The Elections Division will review the number of voters registered as members of each political party on the 275th day before the primary to determine if the party has satisfied the registration requirement and is qualified to nominate candidates at the next primary election.

The Elections Division will evaluate each political party's major political party status on the 271st day before each primary election.

Organizational Documents

ORS 248.007 and 254.365

Major political parties are required to file with the Elections Division current organizational documents and the party's operating statement and intent as provided for in ORS 248.012 to 248.315. Deadlines to submit:

1 Organizational documents

No later than the 30th day after organizational documents are adopted or amended.

2 List of party officers

No later than the 10th day after party officers are selected or changed.

For campaign finance reporting requirements see the Campaign Finance Manual and the ORESTAR User's Manuals available at **www.oregonvotes.gov**.

3 If adopted, a certified copy of party rule allowing nonaffiliated voters to vote in the party's primary

No later than February 19, 2020, the 90th day before the primary.

Nomination of Major Political Party Candidates

ORS 248.007

Major political parties nominate candidates for partisan office at the primary election. Candidates may file for office by submitting a declaration of candidacy and paying the filing fee or by submitting a completed nominating petition containing the required number of signatures.

For detailed instruction on filing for office, see the State Candidate's Manual available at **www.oregonvotes.gov**.

Designated Filer Notification

ORS 251.026 and 251.115

Major political parties may submit statements for inclusion in both the primary and the general election voters' pamphlets. Prior to filing, a current party officer must provide the Elections Division with the first and last name and contact information for the person authorized to submit the statement. At the general election the ORESTAR account user name of the designated filer must also be submitted.

Deadline to Notify Elections Division of Designated Filer

Primary Election	February 27, 2020
General Election	August 11, 2020

For detailed instructions on political party statements in the voters' pamphlet, see the State Voters' Pamphlet Manual available at **www.oregonvotes.gov**.

Minor Political Party

Qualification

ORS 248.008 and 248.009

The procedures for forming a minor political party are explained in the following sections and should be reviewed thoroughly. Failure to follow the instructions completely may invalidate the petition.

Chief Sponsor

The chief sponsor is the individual responsible for the preparation and organization of the petition including:

- signing and filing a statement providing required information for the prospective petition;
- designating whether petition circulators will be paid or unpaid;
- educating and monitoring circulators;
- collecting signatures; and
- submitting signatures.

Filing a Prospective Petition

Before gathering any signatures, the chief sponsor of a minor political party formation must file:

Form SEL 198 Prospective Petition – Political Party Formation, which must be completed and signed, naming the political party and designating circulator pay status. Incomplete forms will be rejected.

If any information provided on form SEL 198 changes, including circulator pay status, an amended form SEL 198 must be filed within 10 calendar days of the change.

The Chief Sponsor is also encouraged to:

Authorize individuals to act on their behalf in most matters regarding the petition process by completing and filing Form SEL 307 Agent Authorization.

Approval to Circulate

After receiving the filing, the Elections Division reviews the form for required information and if complete, will provide written approval to circulate the prospective minor political party formation petition which includes:

- ✓ petition number;
- ✓ number of signatures required;
- ✓ filing deadline; and
- ✓ an official signature sheet template that the chief sponsor must use to collect signatures.

Formation is:	Required Signatures:	
Statewide	1.5% of the number of votes cast statewide for governor	22,046
Less than statewide	1.5% of the number of votes cast in the district for governor	Contact the Elections Division for the required number of signatures.

Signatures are due no later than 2 years after the prospective petition is filed.

Official Templates

The official template is a ten line signature sheet, which includes the name of the party being formed, circulator pay status and the name and address of the chief sponsor.

Modifications to the Official Template

If, after receiving approval to circulate, the chief sponsor's address or circulator pay status changes, the chief sponsor must complete and submit to the Elections Division an updated SEL 198. The Elections Division will provide a modified template that includes the new information and will also provide the deadline for the chief sponsor to stop circulating previous versions.

The chief sponsor must stop circulating the previous version no later than 30 days after the date the updated SEL 198 is received by the Elections Division.

The chief sponsor or an authorized agent may request other modifications to the official template by completing and submitting:

Form SEL 321 Template Modification – Political Party Formation.

The chief sponsor may request modification of official templates at any time.

The Elections Division will review all requests made and provide modified templates if necessary. Multiple versions of official templates may be approved and be in circulation simultaneously.

Signature Sheet Requirements

Using the official template, the chief sponsor will produce signature sheets that meet the following formatting requirements:

- → standard 8½" x 11" size paper, or equivalent;
- → at least 20 pound uncoated paper, or equivalent; and
- → printed on white or colored paper stock to enable elections officials to readily verify signatures. Colored paper must be approved by the Elections Division before circulating.

Signatures collected on unapproved signature sheets will be rejected.

Gathering Signatures

Unapproved petition sheets and those that do not comply with legal requirements and guidelines will be rejected.

Chief Sponsor

1. The chief sponsor must review with circulators the legal requirements and guidelines for circulating the formation petition;
2. monitor circulator activities to ensure compliance;
3. obtain more than the required number of signatures to ensure the petition contains a sufficient number of valid signatures; and
4. submit signatures for verification.

See Submitting Signatures on page 11.

To ensure compliance with circulating requirements, the chief sponsor must educate their circulators on the guidelines for circulation and monitor their activities.

Circulator Requirements

Each circulator must:	What this means:
→ Personally witness each signature collected.	✓ Watch the person sign the petition. It is not sufficient to merely be present in the same room or vicinity.
→ Complete the circulator certification after witnessing all signatures collected on a sheet,	✓ Sign the certification using a legal signature. A legal signature is defined as a signature possessing obvious and predominantly matching characteristics to signatures on file from a paid circulator's registration, signatures in the Oregon voter registration file, or the signature on an official government document. Initials, signature stamps, illegible or printed script are not sufficient unless verified by exemplar.
→ Provide the date when the certification was signed.	✓ The date must be provided in month, day, year order if written in all numbers

A circulator's failure to comply with these requirements may result in the rejection of the petition signature sheets and a felony conviction for the circulator.

Circulator Prohibitions

It is against the law for circulators to:

- → circulate a petition containing a false signature;
- → attempt to obtain the signature of a person who is not qualified to sign the petition;
  ⓘ Only active registered voters may sign a petition.
- → make false statements to any person who signs the petition or requests information about it;
- → offer money or anything of value to another person to sign or not sign the petition;
- → sell or offer to sell signature sheets; and
- → write, alter, correct, clarify, or obscure any information about the signers unless the signer initials after the changes are made.
  ⓘ A circulator may assist a disabled signer who requests assistance in completing their printed name, address and date signed.

! Violations of the circulator requirements may result in conviction of a felony with a fine of up to $125,000 and/or a prison sentence of up to 5 years. ORS 260.715.

Signer Requirements

Each petition signer must:	What this means:
→ provide an original signature but is encouraged to provide their printed name, date signed and address; and	✓ Petition signers must sign the petition using a signature contained in their voter registration record.
→ be an active registered voter at the time of signing the petition in the electoral district where the petition is being circulated	✓ Information in the voter's registration record must be up to date so they would be able to vote for candidates of the political party if formed

Signature Date

If no date is provided by the signer, the signature is only considered valid if the signer:

- ✓ was an active registered voter between the date the petition was approved to circulate and the circulator's certification date or
- ✓ originally registered to vote on or after the date the petition was approved to circulate and was an active registered voter between their original registration date and the circulator's certification date

ⓘ This standard also applies to any signer that provides a date of birth, or a date that has not yet occurred at the time of verification, instead of the date they signed the petition.

Signer Prohibitions

It is against the law for signers to:

- → sign another person's name under any circumstances;
- → sign a petition more than one time; or
- → sign a petition when not qualified to sign it.

! Only active registered voters may sign a petition. If the signer is not registered to vote or an active voter, then the signature will be rejected unless a completed registration card is received by a designated voter registration agency or an elections filing officer before 5 pm the day the petition is signed or 11:59 pm if completed electronically online at **www.oregonvotes.gov**.

Certification of Signature Sheets

OAR 165-014-0270

After all signatures on a signature sheet have been collected, circulators complete the certification by signing their legal signature and providing the date when the certification was signed.

If the circulator certification is not completed or determined to be insufficient the signature sheet will be rejected.

Prior to submission to elections officials the circulator may correct the following defects:

Circulator Signature Defects

If the circulator has:	Then the circulator should:
→ signed using only initials; Unless verified by exemplar.	✓ sign and re-date certification with legal signature;
→ signed using a signature stamp; Unless approved under ORS 246.025.	✓ re-sign and re-date certification with legal signature;
→ signed using an illegible signature; Unless verified by exemplar.	✓ re-sign and re-date certification with legal signature;
→ photocopied or carbon copied the certification; or	✓ sign and re-date certification with legal signature; or
→ signed in a manner that the signature, printed name and address are all illegible;	✓ re-sign and re-date certification with legal signature.

Certification Date Defects

If the date is:	Then the circulator should:
→ missing;	✓ re-sign and date **or** date and initial correction;
→ crossed out;	✓ re-sign and re-date **or** re-date and initial correction;
→ overwritten with a different date;	✓ re-sign and re-date **or** re-date and initial correction;
→ earlier than all petition signers; Does not apply if the circulator and the only signer are the same person.	✓ re-sign and re-date **or** re-date and initial correction;
→ earlier than some, but not all petition signers; Only those signatures dated on or before the date of the certification will be accepted.	✓ re-sign and re-date **or** re-date and initial correction;
→ partial or ambiguous; or	✓ re-sign and re-date **or** re-date and initial correction; or Date must be provided in month, day, year order if written in all numeric characters.
→ obscured in any way by white out or other correction fluid or adhesive tape,	✓ re-sign and re-date **or** re-date and initial correction

The following defects in the circulator certification cannot be corrected and any signature sheet submitted that contains one of these defects will be rejected:

Incurable Defects

→ the original signature of a circulator has been crossed out and a different circulator's signature is inserted,
Unless the original signature is that of an individual whose signature appears on the same signature sheet as a signer;

→ two individuals sign and date as circulator,
Unless the only signers and the circulators are the same people; or

→ white-out or other correction fluid or adhesive tape appears on the signature line.

Examples of circulator signature and date defects are available in the Appendix 1 Illustrated Examples in the Circulator Training Manual available at **www.oregonvotes.gov**.

Submitting Signatures

The chief sponsor or an authorized agent must personally deliver or mail signature sheets to the Elections Division when submitting signatures for verification. Signature sheets will not be accepted from circulators, circulator companies, or any other individual or entity if the chief sponsor or an authorized agent is not physically present.

Chief Sponsor or Authorized Agent

1. The Chief Sponsor or an authorized agent must ensure each signature sheet certification is signed and dated by the circulator;
2. sort signature sheets by circulator and separate into stacks of 200;
3. number each signature sheet sequentially in the space provided;
4. submit signature sheets containing at least 100% of required number of signatures; and
5. affirm the petition is complete by filing:

Form SEL 339 Petition Submission – Initiative, Referendum, Recall, Political Party Formation marked completed.

Signature Verification

The Elections Division will only verify signatures once the chief sponsor affirms the petition is complete and if the petition signature sheets accepted for verification contain a number of unverified signatures equal to or greater than the required number of signatures.

The Elections Division processes signature sheets submitted for verification in accordance with the Statistical Sampling Procedures for Other Than State Petitions adopted under administrative rule. This includes:

- ✓ comparing the submitted signature sheets to the official template;
- ✓ verifying sheets are numbered sequentially;
- ✓ determining if the circulator's certification is sufficient; and
- ✓ verifying original signatures using voter registration records.

After signature verification has been completed the Elections Division provides the chief sponsor:

- ✓ results of signature verification and
- ✓ final number of signatures determined to be valid.

For parties that failed to achieve ballot access, the Elections Division will provide:

- ✓ information on how to submit additional signatures if the filing deadline has not passed.

If the filing deadline has passed and the chief sponsor failed to submit enough valid signatures, the formation petition is void.

For parties that achieved ballot access, the Elections Division will provide:

- ✓ information on how and when candidate nominations must be made.

Withdrawing a Formation Petition

To withdraw the formation petition the chief sponsor must complete, sign and file:

Form SEL 375 Withdrawal - Petition.

→ The formation petition can only be withdrawn if the chief sponsor has not submitted the total number of signatures required for verification.

→ Once withdrawn, the formation petition cannot be re-activated. The chief sponsor may re-file the formation petition and begin the process again.

Campaign Finance Reporting

Oregon campaign finance law requires each minor political party to establish a campaign account and file a Statement of Organization designating a treasurer within three business days of first receiving a contribution or making an expenditure. Campaign Finance law also requires the filing of campaign finance transactions electronically.

The Secretary of State developed ORESTAR as a secure web-based electronic reporting system that committees must use to file campaign finance transactions unless the committee is eligible to file a Certificate of Limited Contributions and Expenditures.

For further detail on campaign finance reporting requirements see the Campaign Finance Manual and the ORESTAR User's Manuals available at **www.oregonvotes.gov**.

Organizational Documents

ORS 248.009

A political party must file with the Elections Division a copy of:

1 Organizational documents

No later than the 30th day after organizational documents are adopted or amended and

2 A list of party officers

No later than the 10th day after party officers are selected or changed.

For campaign finance reporting requirements see the Campaign Finance Manual and the ORESTAR User's Manuals available at **www.oregonvotes.gov**.

Minor Party Maintenance

ORS 248.008

A minor political party may nominate candidates for any partisan office within the electoral district in which the party is established for the general election immediately following formation.

However, in order to nominate candidates to partisan office at subsequent general elections, the minor political party must maintain its status by achieving either of the following:

1 Registered party members equal to at least .5% of all registered voters in Oregon

or

2 **A)** Registered party members equal to at least .1% of all votes cast for Governor in the electoral district in which the party formed **and**

B) At least once in a 4-year period, total votes cast for a party candidate are equal to at least 1% of all votes cast for the office of US President, US Senator, Governor, Secretary of State, State Treasurer, or Attorney General in the electoral district in which the party formed.

Deadline to Satisfy Requirements to Maintain Minor Political Party Status
The Elections Division will evaluate each minor political party at least monthly between May 19, 2020 and August 5, 2020, until either the party has successfully maintained its status or the deadline has passed.

Nomination of Minor Political Party Candidates

ORS 248.009 and 249.048

To nominate candidates, a minor political party must hold a nominating convention either under state law or under party by-laws. The nominating process must provide equal opportunity for all registered party members to participate in selecting nominees or selecting the delegates who will make the nominations.

Publish Notice of Nominating Convention

Once scheduled, a notice of the nominating convention must be published at least once in at least three newspapers of general circulation in the electoral district in which the minor political party seeks to nominate candidates.

The notice must contain:

- ✓ time and place of the assembly and
- ✓ office or offices for which nominations will be made.

If there are fewer than three newspapers of general circulation within the electoral district, then the minor political party must do both of the following:

- ✓ publish notice at least once in one newspaper and
- ✓ give public notice sufficient to ensure party members in the electoral district receive notice of the convention.

Deadline for Minor Political Party to Publish Notice
The notice must be published no later than the 10th day before the scheduled nominating convention.

Convening Nominating Convention

The nominating convention must be conducted according to the minor political party's organizational documents filed with the Elections Division and in effect at the time the convention is held.

Deadline for Minor Political Party to Convene Nominating Convention
A nominating convention must be held in time to file certificates of nomination with the filing officer by August 25, 2020.

After the convention has completed the nomination process, candidates and designated party officers complete, sign and file with the Elections Division:

Form SEL 110 Candidate Filing – Minor Political Party with the Candidate Nomination Certificate executed by a party officer and notarized.

A major political party candidate on the primary election ballot who failed to receive the nomination may not be the candidate of any other political party or become a nonaffiliated candidate for the same office at the general election.

Minor political parties may not nominate a candidate who is the nominee of another political party at the same election in order to satisfy the one percent candidate vote total maintenance requirement.

Designated Filer Notification

ORS 251.115

Minor political parties may submit statements for inclusion in both the primary and the general election voters' pamphlets. Prior to filing, a current party officer must provide the Elections Division with the first and last name and contact information for the person authorized to submit the statement. At the general election the ORESTAR account user name of the designated filer must also be submitted.

Deadline to Notify Elections Division of Designated Filer

Primary Election	February 27, 2020
General Election	August 11, 2020

For detailed instruction on political party statements in the voters' pamphlet, see the State Voters' Pamphlet Manual available at **www.oregonvotes.gov**.

List of Forms

SEL 110
Candidate Filing – Minor Political Party

SEL 198
Prospective Petition – Political Party Formation

SEL 307
Agent Authorization

SEL 321
Template Modification – Political Party Formation

SEL 375
Withdrawal - Petition