

Minor Party/Third Party Ballot Access

Political parties that did not receive 20 percent of the votes cast in the last General Election (§17-13-40, Code of Alabama, 1975), often called “third parties,” must take the following steps in order to obtain statewide ballot access:

- At least 60 days before each election, file with the Secretary of State an original copy of the party’s emblem and a copy in a digital or other electronic format acceptable by the Secretary of State. [§17-6-29]
- Hold a mass meeting, beat meeting or other meeting for the political party to nominate candidate(s) for public offices or delegates for a convention at which candidates would be nominated. No less than **five days** prior to the date of the meeting, public notice of the time and place must be filed with the probate judge in the county where the meeting will be held and published in a newspaper of general circulation in the county. [§17-13-50(a)-(b)]
- File a certificate of nomination of candidates selected at the mass meeting or convention. The chairman and secretary of the mass meeting should file a certificate of nomination for state candidates with the secretary of state. A certificate of nomination for county candidates should be filed with the local probate judge. The certificate of nomination is due on or before **5:00 p.m., March 1st, 2016**, the date of the primary election. [§17-9-3(a)(2)]
- File a petition containing signatures of at least **three percent** of the qualified electors who cast ballots for the office of governor in the last General Election for state, county, district, or other political subdivision in which the political party seeks to qualify candidates for office. A petition for statewide ballot access must have **35,412** valid signatures.
- For ballot access in the 2016 General Election, the petition must be filed no later than **the date of the primary, March 1st**, with the secretary of state for state or federal ballot access or with the probate judge for county ballot access. [§17-6-22] For ballot access in special elections, please contact the Secretary of State or the Probate Judge for the petition deadline.
- Minor party candidates are subject to the reporting requirements of the *Alabama Fair Campaign Practices Act* and must also file a *Statement of Economic Interests*, (§36-25-15), with the appropriate election official simultaneously with the date he or she becomes a candidate as defined in §17-5-2(a)(1). For political parties, the appropriate election official is the individual with whom the candidate files his or her qualifying papers. For information on filing the Statement of Economic Interests, call the Alabama Ethics Commission (334) 242-2997.

A sample petition form, which may be photo copied, is available from the Office of the Secretary of State and on the Secretary of State’s web site: www.alabamavotes.gov.

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PETITION REQUIREMENTS

- A statement that includes the name of the political party, the date of the general election, and the name of the political subdivision for which ballot access is sought, if the petition is not for statewide ballot access. Petitions for the establishment of ballot access for a political party in a special election shall not be required to include the date of the special election at the top of each page. [Alabama Administrative Code, Rule 820-2-4-.05(2)]
- Numbered pages. [Alabama Administrative Code, Rule 820-2-4-.05(2)]
- Requested information for each person signing includes name, residential address, county of residence, city of residence (if applicable), voting place, date of birth and signature. A signature shall not be deemed invalid for lacking any portion of the requested information if the disclosed information is sufficient for determining the validity of a signature. [Alabama Administrative Code, Rule 820-2-4-.05(3)]

PETITION SUGGESTIONS

- Have the voter sign in ink and write legibly.
- Obtain signatures in excess of the required number, as some signatures may not be valid and/or identifiable.
- Keep a copy of the petition.

PETITION FILING LOCATIONS

Petitions for **statewide ballot access and for state and federal offices** must be filed in the **Elections Division of the Office of the Secretary of State**, located in the State Capitol, Room E-210, 600 Dexter Avenue in Montgomery, Alabama.

Petitions for **countywide ballot access and for county offices** must be filed in the office of the **county probate judge**.

Mailing address: **Elections Division**
 Office of the Secretary of State
 P.O. Box 5616
 Montgomery Alabama 36103-5616

Telephone: **(334) 242-7210 or (800) 274-VOTE**