



State of Wisconsin  
Ethics Commission

# THE LIFECYCLE OF A STATE CANDIDATE COMMITTEE

FROM REGISTRATION TO TERMINATION

APRIL 2020



State of Wisconsin  
Ethics Commission

## OUTLINE

- WHO IS REQUIRED TO REGISTER?
- COMPLETING A REGISTRATION STATEMENT
- FILING FOR EXEMPTION STATUS
- TERMINATION OF A CANDIDATE COMMITTEE

# WHO IS REQUIRED TO REGISTER?

Any candidate for election to public office must register a candidate committee with the appropriate filing officer as soon as:

- (a) The individual takes any of the following actions;
  1. Files nomination papers;
  2. Is nominated by a caucus or political party;
  3. Solicit/receive/spend funds in order to bring about the individual's nomination;
- (b) The individual holds public office and is the subject of a recall petition; or
- (c) The individual holds a state or local office.

WIS. STAT. § [11.0101\(1\)](#), [11.0202\(1\)\(a\)](#).



# ETHICS COMMISSION AS FILING OFFICER

The Wisconsin Ethics Commission serves as the filing officer for the following candidate committees:

Governor

Lieutenant Governor

Attorney General

Secretary of State

State Treasurer

State Superintendent of Public Instruction

Justice of the Supreme Court

Court of Appeals Judge

Circuit Court Judge

State Senator

Representative to the Assembly

District Attorney

State candidates register their committees and submit reports using the [Campaign Finance Information System](#) (CFIS or “see-fiss”).



# COMPLETING A REGISTRATION STATEMENT

## CANDIDATE INFORMATION

**Candidate Committee Registration CF-1**      STEP 1 → **STEP 2** → STEP 3 → STEP 4      ?

**Committee Type**

Committee Type\*    State Candidate ▼

**Candidate Information**

First Name*	<input type="text"/>	Middle Name	<input type="text"/>	Last Name*	<input type="text"/>
Email*	<input type="text"/>	Phone*	<input type="text"/>	Phone 2	<input type="text"/>
Election*	<input type="text"/>	Party Affiliation*	<input type="text"/>	Branch	<input type="text"/>
Office*	<input type="text"/>	District/County	<input type="text"/>		
<b>Mailing Address:</b>					
Address Line 1*	<input type="text"/>	Address Line 2	<input type="text"/>		
City*	<input type="text"/>	State*	Wisconsin ▼	Zip*	<input type="text"/>

Provide an email address and phone number where emails and messages are checked often.



# COMPLETING A REGISTRATION STATEMENT

## COMMITTEE INFORMATION

Will be used on attribution statements/disclaimers.

Provide an email address and phone number where emails and messages are checked often.

Committee Information			
Committee Name*	<input type="text"/>	Acronym (if any)	<input type="text"/>
Choose a 4-digit PIN. This PIN will be used to electronically sign reports and registration amendments.			
Email*	<input type="text"/>	Phone*	<input type="text"/>
<b>Mailing Address:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Same as Candidate Mailing Address			
Address Line 1*	<input type="text"/>	Address Line 2	<input type="text"/>
City*	<input type="text"/>	State*	Wisconsin <input type="text"/>
		Zip*	<input type="text"/>

  

Treasurer Information			
First Name*	<input type="text"/>	Middle Name	<input type="text"/>
Email*	<input type="text"/>	Phone*	<input type="text"/>
<b>Mailing Address:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Same as Candidate Mailing Address			
Address Line 1*	<input type="text"/>	Address Line 2	<input type="text"/>
City*	<input type="text"/>	State*	Wisconsin <input type="text"/>
		Zip*	<input type="text"/>

Candidate can serve as Treasurer.



# COMPLETING A REGISTRATION STATEMENT

## DEPOSITORY INSTITUTION AND EXEMPTION

Can list personal depository institution if committee is eligible for exemption.

The screenshot shows a web form with two main sections: "Depository Information" and "Status".

**Depository Information**

Name of Financial Institution\* [text input]  
Address Line 1\* [text input] Address Line 2 [text input]  
City\* [text input] State\* Wisconsin [dropdown] Zip\* [text input]-[text input]

**Status**

Are you Exempt from Filing Campaign Finance Reports?  Yes  No

If you do not anticipate receiving or spending more than \$2,000 in a calendar year, you may select "Exempt" status. Exempt committees are not required to file campaign finance reports. If your committee receives or spends more than \$2,000 in a calendar year, it must amend its status to non-exempt, and file campaign finance reports covering the entire calendar year.

Buttons: CONTINUE CLEAR CANCEL

Two blue arrows point from the text above to the "Name of Financial Institution" field and the "Yes" radio button in the "Status" section.

If a committee anticipates that it will not have campaign finance activity in an aggregate amount exceeding \$2,000 in a calendar year, they can note that they are eligible for exemption from filing periodic reports while filing the online registration statement in CFIS.



# COMPLETING A REGISTRATION STATEMENT

## EXEMPTION AFFIRMATION

**+++ EXEMPTION FROM FILING CAMPAIGN FINANCE REPORTS s.11.0104, Stats. +++**

You may be eligible for an exemption from filing campaign finance reports. Consult the appropriate Campaign Finance Overview to determine if the registrant qualifies for exemption.

- This registrant is eligible for exemption. This registrant will not accept contributions, make disbursements or incur obligations in an aggregate amount of more than \$2,000 in a calendar year.
- This registrant is no longer eligible to claim exemption.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Candidate or Treasurer

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



# COMPLETING A REGISTRATION STATEMENT CERTIFICATION

## CERTIFICATE

### TREASURER

I, Frog, Kermit  
certify the information in this statement is true and complete.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Treasurer \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_

### CANDIDATE

I, Frog, Kermit  
certify the information in this statement is true, correct and complete, and that this is the only committee authorized to act on my behalf.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Candidate \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_

To activate your committee, send a signed copy of your registration form to the Ethics Commission. This can be done by:

- Mail to PO Box 7125, Madison WI 53707,
- E-Mail to [campaignfinance@wi.gov](mailto:campaignfinance@wi.gov), or
- In-person delivery to 101 E. Wilson St., Ste. 127, Madison WI, 53703.

THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS REQUIRED BY ss.9.10(2)(d), 11.0203, STATS. FAILURE TO PROVIDE THE INFORMATION MAY SUBJECT YOU TO THE PENALTIES OF ss. 8.30(2), 11.1400, 11.1401, STATS.

Report Generated On: 03/11/2020



# IMPORTANT NOTES ON REGISTRATION

- Every candidate for election to public office must have a committee.
- The candidate does not register themselves for campaign finance purposes; they register a committee.
- Candidates cannot receive contributions or make disbursements until they have registered a committee, except to
  - open a bank account for the committee
  - rent a PO box
  - Produce nomination papers
- Any change of committee information requires an amendment to be filed within ten days of the change.

WIS. STAT. §§ [11.0202\(2\)\(b\)](#), [11.0203\(3\)\(a\)](#).



# EXEMPT STATUS: EXCEEDING \$2,000

If the committee exceeds the \$2,000 of activity, it needs to amend the registration statement by checking "No," in the Status section of the "Edit Registration Information" page in CFIS.

**Status**

Are you Exempt from Filing Campaign Finance Reports?  Yes  No

If you do not anticipate receiving or spending more than \$2,000 in a calendar year, you may select "Exempt" status. Exempt committees are not required to file campaign finance reports. If your committee receives or spends more than \$2,000 in a calendar year, it must amend its status to non-exempt, and file campaign finance reports covering the entire calendar year.

Verify that your information is up-to-date and accurate:  Last Verified Date : 10/29/2019

SUBMIT

CANCEL

The committee is then required to file campaign finance reports.

The first campaign finance report filed after a committee is no longer exempt covers activity from January 1 of that calendar year, or the date the committee was registered, whichever is later.



# RECORDS RETENTION

Committees need to maintain all campaign finance records for **at least three years** after the date of the election that the candidate participated in.

Committees that are exempt from filing campaign finance reports are still required to maintain all financial records, even though they are not required to file regular reports.

[Wis. STAT. § 11.0201\(4\).](#)



# TERMINATION OF A CANDIDATE COMMITTEE

**File Report/Edit Pending Transactions** Test Candidate Committee - Daffy Duck for Wisconsin (0105410) ?

Filing Period Name:  Filing Year:

Transaction Type:  Transaction Category:  Contributor/Payee Name:

Transaction Date Range:  To:

Amount Range:   Non-Compliant  Not Yet Filed 72 Hr. Report

To group by column, drag and drop column here

Transaction Date	Contributor/Payee Name	Transaction Type	Transaction Category	Amount	Address Line1	Address Line2	City	State	Zip	Compliance	<input type="checkbox"/> 72 Hr. Reports	Edit <input type="checkbox"/>
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No records to display.

A candidate committee can terminate its registration if it:

- Will no longer engage in financial activity;
- Files a final report showing that the cash balance of the committee is zero; and,
- Completes a termination request in CFIS.

To file a termination request:

1. Go to "File Report/Edit Pending Transactions" in the CFIS menu, Choose the current filing period name from the drop down and click "SEARCH."
2. Verify that all transactions show the committee's cash balance as zero by previewing the report.
3. Click "Request for Termination."



# TERMINATION OF A CANDIDATE COMMITTEE

Reason Code

Code\*

SUBMIT

- reg. prior to 1/1/16 - under \$2,500/major purpose
- Bank Account Closed
- Committee Terminated
- Candidate Deceased
- Duplicate Committee
- Not Running for Office
- Non-Resident - No WI Activity
- Running for Local Office
- Non-Resident-WI not Major Purpose

Staff will review your request to terminate and contact you if your committee cannot be terminated for any reason.

Once your termination request is approved, you will receive one final email to your committee stating that your registration status has been changed.

Current office holders cannot terminate their candidate committee while in office.

4. Choose a termination reason code and click "SUBMIT."

[Wis. STAT. § 11.0105](#)



# TERMINATION: DISPOSAL OF RESIDUAL FUNDS

A committee that wishes to terminate can dispose of its residual funds by:

- Repaying outstanding loans, or receiving forgiveness for them;
- Returning contributions in an amount not more than the original (candidate or treasurer may choose which contributions to return);
- Donating to any tax-exempt charitable organization or the Common School Fund;
- Transferring money to another committee within contribution limits; or
- Using any combination of the above.

WIS. STAT. §§ [11.0105](#), [11.1208\(2\)\(a\)](#).



# WHERE TO GET MORE INFORMATION

- [State Candidate Committee Overview Manual](#) (2019)
- [Candidate Committee Overview Page](#)
- Wisconsin Ethics Commission website (<https://ethics.wi.gov>)
- Wisconsin Ethics Commission staff:  
[campaignfinance@wi.gov](mailto:campaignfinance@wi.gov) or (608) 266-8123

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