

# 2018 LPNY Guide for Petitioners

Version July 6, 2018

## **A. General Information**

1. The petitioning period for **state and local offices start on July 10, 2018. The filing period is August 14-21, 2018.** **Please send in all your petition sheets by Friday, August 17, 2018.** If you collect signatures after this, please contact us and we can make arrangements to get those petition sheets. Any signatures collected before or after the petitioning period are invalid.
2. Visit the LPNY website's **petitioning portal** ([www.lpnewyork.org/petitioning](http://www.lpnewyork.org/petitioning)) for information on downloading and printing petitions, as well as detailed instructions and tips.

## **B. Preparation for Petitioning**

1. **Bring multiple copies of the petition sheets.** If you are printing petition sheets from a file, print as many copies as you need. If you are photocopying them, be sure to keep a blank petition sheet in case you need to photocopy more. Place multiple copies of the petition sheet on the clipboards.
2. **Bring more than one clipboard.** If one person in the group is willing to sign, immediately hand the second clipboard, with pen, to the next person in the group. If you are petitioning with other people, bring extra clipboards with petitions already clipped to them.
3. **Bring plenty of ballpoint pens.** If it is a clear day – no rain in sight – gel pens work great, but if the paper gets even the least bit wet the signatures and address information will run and become illegible. Check the indelibility of the pen's ink on a separate sheet of paper before use. Tie the pens to the clipboard to avoid losing them. Bring pens without caps as they tend not to get stolen.
4. **Bring flyers for the candidate(s).** You can give them to those signing the petition or even those who do not sign the petition. Those who don't sign may seek you out to sign the petition and certainly handing out such literature helps promote the candidate in order to secure more votes.

## **C. Rules for Collecting Signatures**

1. Only registered New York voters can collect and witness petition signatures.
2. You must use the address in which you are registered with the Board of Elections to witness signatures.
3. Petition signers must be registered New York voters. Never ask if a prospect is registered to vote. Just get signatures. Let the opposition find which are invalid.
4. If the person has signed any other petition for the same political office, they cannot sign our petition.
5. If you have signed any other petition for the same political office, you cannot sign or witness signatures.
6. You cannot witness your own signature. Have someone else witness your signature on a separate sheet. You can witness anyone else's signatures, including family and friends.
7. Do not allow someone to sign for another, even if the other person is present and agrees. Such signatures are legally fraudulent. If it happens, cross out the signature with a single line.
8. You must personally witness each signature you collect. If a person offers to sign for someone else or offers to get a signature for a person remote from you, then give them a clean, fresh sheet and have them fill out and sign the witness statement. They can either give you the sheet after they signed the witness statement, give it to your county coordinator, or they can mail it to one of the collectors.

## D. Layout of Petition Sheets

The State Committee distributes statewide petition sheets. For local candidates, contact the LPNY if you need help setting up a petition sheet. The top part of the petition contains the name, office, and residence addresses of the candidates as well as the name and residence addresses of the Committee to fill Vacancies. Under that is the signature area and the witness statement.

**FIGURE 1 – SIGNATURE AREA**

In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand, the day and year placed opposite my signature.

|          | Date                   | Name of Signer (signature required)<br>(printed name may be added) | Residence | Town or City<br>Except in NYC, County |
|----------|------------------------|--|-----------|---------------------------------------|
| <b>1</b> | / /18<br>printed name: | <b>X</b>   |           |                                       |

### 1. Signature Area (FIGURE 1)

- **Date.** This is the date in which the signature is signed. The date cannot be outside the petitioning date range (see section on dates for collecting petitions). Tips:
  - **Place the date on your petitions yourself on every line before you have someone sign the sheet.** At the end of the day, put a line through any unused lines.
  - **Always start a new day with a new sheet with that day's date placed on every line.** If you collect signatures on July 22, and someone places July 21 on the sheet below a signature date July 22, all the signatures above the July 21 date will be invalid. You can correct a wrong date by crossing the date out with a single line and writing the correct date and initialing it.
- **Signature.** Have the signer place their signature after the "X"
- **Residence.** Petitions signers need to give their **residence street address** (NO P.O. BOX addresses). If the mailing address is different, have them place the mailing address in the address area as well. If the signer hesitates to provide their physical address tell them it is only to verify that they are a registered voter and it will not be used for any other purpose.
- **Town or City.** Specify the TOWN or CITY in the box on the right. New York City requires the county to be specified. Do not use village or hamlet names.

### 2. Witness Statement (FIGURE 2)

- Sign the witness statement at the bottom of the page. You can fill out the witness statement at any time after you are finished collecting signatures on the page.
  - Witness address must include zip code.
  - Spell out the number of signatures on the page (e.g., ten, nine, etc.).
  - Date the witness statement as of the date you actually fill it in. The date of the witness statement need not be the same as the date of the last signatory on the page, but cannot be earlier.
  - Don't forget the "Witness Identification Information" below the signature and be sure to state your town or city.
  - **Do not fill in the "Sheet No.: \_\_\_\_\_"** at the bottom of the sheet. USE PENCIL to write the Congressional District on the CD line for the most prevalent Congressional District represented by the people who signed the petition.

**FIGURE 2 – WITNESS STATEMENT**

**STATEMENT OF WITNESS**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (name of witness) state: I am a duly qualified voter of the State of New York and now reside at \_\_\_\_\_ (residence address). Each of the individuals whose names are subscribed to this petition sheet containing \_\_\_\_\_ (fill in number) signatures, subscribed the same in my presence on the dates above indicated and identified himself or herself to be the individual who signed this sheet. I understand that this statement will be accepted for all purposes as the equivalent of an affidavit and, if it contains a material false statement, shall subject me to the same penalties as if I had been duly sworn.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Witness

WITNESS IDENTIFICATION INFORMATION: The following information must be completed prior to filing with the board of elections in order for this petition sheet to be valid.  
Town or City: \_\_\_\_\_ County: \_\_\_\_\_

C.D. \_\_\_\_\_

Sheet No. \_\_\_\_\_

## E. Collection of Signatures

This section lists information on the actual collection of signatures. When petitioning, be sure to **be friendly and courteous**. Don't get discouraged if someone declines to sign a petition. **Just move on.**

### 1. Where to petition?

- a. There are many different kinds of places people have found success with collecting signatures for petitions. These include public/farmer's markets, fairs, festivals, carnivals, community music events, food cart lines, beaches, subway stations, bus stations, train stations, parks, parade lines (especially when people are waiting for it to start), door-to-door, and in front of libraries and post offices, among others. While many signatures you collect will be from strangers, you can also get signatures from people you already know, including family members, friends, co-workers, and neighbors, among others.
- b. **Lines are important.** Many petitioners have had a lot of success getting signatures from people waiting in lines (including lines at fairs, festivals, parades, etc.). These people are not doing anything and are more likely to sign. In this case, you will want to start from the back and move forward in the line. Otherwise, if you start from the front and someone says "no," the next person in lines sees that and may also decline. The same goes for crowds that may be facing one direction. Start in the back.

### 2. Approaching People for Signatures

- a. Ask, "Will you sign to put a candidate for governor onto the ballot this fall?" Never use the word petition. Avoid using the word libertarian if possible. Say that your candidate is not a Democrat or Republican. It is best to keep the initial question simple.
- b. Give them a flyer (about the candidate) only if 1) the prospect asks, 2) the prospect has already signed, or 3) it is clear that the prospect will not sign. Do not give the prospect an excuse not to sign, such as, "I will read this and get back to you. Will you be here next Tuesday?"
- c. Remember: the attitude is that you're friendly, but you're telling them what to do, not asking, i.e. that you are doing them a favor, not that they are doing you one. Never beg or ask for help.
- d. Once they take the petition, whether it is to read the back or to sign it, politely excuse yourself to approach someone else with another clipboard.

### 3. Dealing with Rejection

- a. You will certainly find people who refuse to sign the petition. Here are some tips to convince them to sign. If no matter what you say, the person does not want to sign, **don't get discouraged and just move on.**
- b. If the person declines for any reason, tell them it's just to get the candidate on the ballot; it does not mean you are promising to support or vote for them. Most people will agree that anyone should have a chance to run for office and there should be more choices on the ballot.
- c. If the signer says that they have never heard of the candidate, give them a flyer about the candidate.

## **F. Increasing Effectiveness and Success in Collecting Signatures**

1. Ask parents with children to sign the petition. Parents with children age 4 to 16 rarely refuse to sign.
2. **LEGIBILITY.** It is important those who sign petitions sign legibly. If the first signer makes a mistake, the other signers make the same mistakes. To avoid this, when the first person comes back with the board, make sure they filled in all the necessary information. For anything that's missing, ask them for the information and YOU write it in, except for their signature.
3. Have the person squeeze their entire address in the address area. If they do there is no need for them to put anything in the City/Town Box.
4. Once they agree to sign, shut up (stop talking politics) otherwise you risk saying something that would lead them not to sign.
5. Don't talk to anybody for more than 20 seconds. Anybody who does not sign in the first 20 seconds is very unlikely to ever sign and may just argue with you to waste your time.
6. It is okay if it is partially filled out. You need not fill a page with signatures. Any number of signatures is acceptable on a page.
7. When a petition sheet is full, remove it from the clipboard and place it in your bag so it does not get lost or stolen.
8. If one of the candidates is running for NYS Assembly, NYS Senate, or U.S. Congress, a map of the district(s) should be placed on the back of the clipboard for easy reference to entice the voter to sign. "We have a candidate running locally for the \_\_\_\_\_ assembly/senate/congressional district."

## **G. Reviewing Petition Sheets and Making Corrections**

1. Before the person leaves, always check the address and signature or printed name are legible.
2. **DAILY, after you have finished petitioning, sit down and review the signatures.** Make sure the far right column has a city or a town name. If a village's name is placed in that column, the signature will be voided during a challenge. Cross out the village name with a single line and write the town's name. Squeeze it in wherever it fits in the box.
3. If a correction must be made to any field other than the date, cross out the wrong information with a single line and write in the correct information. There is no need to initial if the correction is made before the witness signs the witness statement. If a correction must be made to the date, cross out the wrong date with a single line, write in the correct date, and initial it.
4. Corrections cannot be made to a signature. If the signature is in error, have the voter sign again in the next available line. Cross out the entire erroneous signature line with a single line and initial **both ends** of the cross out.
5. After the witness statement is signed, only the witness can make changes and insertions above the signature. All such should be initialed.

## **H. Miscellaneous Tips**

1. You may create a sample petition and overlay the actual petitions, or place the sample petition on a poster board for people to view.
2. Everyone develops their own style of petitioning. Find a style that works for you. In general, most people agree to sign a petition within 20 seconds of you asking. If they agree to sign, plan about another 2 minutes per person waiting for them to sign, return the petition board, and then you checking the data. If they walk away before you check their information, chances are you will get an incomplete record that will have to be crossed off, or a record that neither you nor anyone else can read.
3. Door to door you can plan about 10 signatures per hour. About 1 hour before any parade you could collect from 70 to 100 signatures per hour. Be sure to have multiple clipboards.
4. The only field that the voter must fill in is the signature. Anyone can fill in date, printed name, residence, city or town or county. Zip code is not required as part of the voter's residence address. Neither the signatory nor the witness should make any stray marks in the signature or date fields. If the pen skips while writing those fields, do not "fix" them.

## **I. Submission of Petition Sheets**

See the Petition Portal on the LPNY website to find out where to submit petition sheets and contact your county Petition Coordinator: <https://lpnewyork.org/petitioning>

1. If possible, turn your petitions in to your regional director daily. If not possible, make arrangements to deliver your completed and partially filled sheets to your regional director or mail them to your regional coordinator or the general collector. ([addresses below](#))
2. As soon as petition signatures are collected, they should be examined by a local or regional coordinator for correctness of count, legitimacy of town or city, and if possible noted in pencil the Congressional District in which the majority of signatures are from, and most importantly, that the witness statement has been completed and is accurate. You can also upload photos/scans of petitions on the Petitioning Portal and state petitioning coordinators can review your sheets.
3. The primary purpose of prompt examination is to notify the individual petitioner of any mistakes so that the errors of the first week of petitioning not repeated through the remaining weeks.
4. IMPORTANT. We want the petition sheets at the final collection and assembly location as soon as possible for two reasons: a) a final check and b) to provide feedback as to our progress.

**General Petition Collector: Fred Cole**  
**1017 Roberta Rd., Schenectady, NY 12303**

## **J. Rights of Petitioners**

1. **If the police attempt to interfere with your right to petition**, check to make sure you are in a spot where the public is allowed to go (sidewalk, public park, public parking lot, public festival). Generally, if the facility/property is publicly owned, you are allowed to petition. However, you are not allowed to petition in a federal building or on private property without the owner's permission. If you anticipate problems, print out the document ("Guide to Federal Laws in Regarding Petitioning") and have a copy ready to be handed to the police officer or official that is ordering you to leave. Then politely, if they still insist, leave. Then call 866-336-3120 (Libertarian Party of New York) to report the incident.
2. If anyone tells you that you cannot petition on public property, start recording if you have a device to do that, be nice, ask if you can just tell them something, hand them a copy of Garvey's laws, and tell them that petitioning on publicly owned property is a federally protected right and that anyone who interferes with a petitioner can be fined up to \$1,000 plus one year in jail plus attorney's fees.