

LIBERTARIAN PARTY OF NEW YORK
GUIDE TO PETITIONING - DESIGNATING PETITIONS FOR STATE COMMITTEE
VERSION FEBRUARY 8, 2022

GENERAL INFORMATION

1. **Designating petitions** refer to petitions to get a candidate on the ballot by collecting signatures from enrolled members of the political party. This is different from independent petitions, which is covered in its own guide, *LPNY Guide to Petitioning - Independent Petitions*.
2. **Petitioning period.** The petitioning period starts on **MARCH 1, 2022**, meaning no signatures can be taken prior to this date. The filing period is **APRIL 4 through 7, 2022**, meaning all petitions must be submitted to the **COLLECTOR (information TBD)** during this timeframe. Any signatures collected before or after the petitioning period are invalid.
3. **Target number of signatures.** You need to get at least **5% signatures*** of the **active** enrolled Libertarians at **MINIMUM**, within the Judicial District of the office you seek, to get a candidate on the primary ballot. It is a good rule of thumb to make your target twice what you need at a minimum, as this helps in case of any issues invalidating signatures. You can have multiple signatures on each petition sheet. Check the **2022 Allocation Worksheet** for the exact number of required signatures.
4. **Help and networking.** Contact your local Libertarian Party affiliate(s) for help and networking. You may have multiple candidates on the petition and petition as a slate of candidates.
5. **Witness signatures vs. petition signatures.** The **petition signatures** are the signatures of the voters you are collecting to hit your target. The **witness signature** is found at the bottom of the sheet and is the person (typically you or a member of your team) witnessing the signatures.

**This may change depending on legislation. The Elections Oversight Committee will keep you updated.*

LAYOUT OF PETITION SHEETS

A petition template will be provided on the LPNY website. See lpny.org/2022-state-committee-elections to get the template. The top part of the petition contains the candidate information area. Under that is the signature area and the statement of witness. You should do your best to make sure voters have to fill out AS LITTLE as possible including filling out the date, name, and address for them, when possible.

1. Candidate Information Area

- **Name of candidate(s).** Full name of candidate as it appears in the voter enrollment lists. (Multiple candidates' names may also be listed if running a slate of candidates, on its own line.)
- **Name of office.** Correct name of the office for which the candidate is running. (This only needs to be listed once if running a slate.)
- **Residence address of candidate(s).** Full address of candidate as it appears in the voter enrollment lists. (If multiple candidates, each candidate's address must be listed on its own line.)
- **Committee on vacancies (optional).** Names and addresses of enrolled Libertarian voters who will serve as a committee to fill the vacancy if the candidate named on the petition later declines to be the candidate. Any enrolled Libertarian in New York State may serve on the committee to fill vacancies. Their addresses must appear as in the voter enrollment lists.

2. Signature Area

- **Date.** This is the date on which the signature is affixed. The date cannot be outside the petitioning period.
 - **Write the date yourself.** Immediately before you hand the petition to a signer, write in the date for them and use that to tell them, “Sign right by the date.”
 - **You can correct dates.** If the wrong date is written for any reason, you can cross it out with a single line, write the correct date, and initial it.
 - **Dates must be in order.** You cannot sign on March 15th on line 5 and then have someone sign on line 7 with the date of March 11th. All signatures above that error would be invalid. If the date is wrong, you can correct it as outlined above.
 - **Optionally, use a new sheet for each day you petition.** By doing this, it allows you to ensure you are not making mistakes over several days.
- **Name of signer (signature is required).** Have the signer place their signature in the box as it appears exactly as listed on the voter registration lists, including suffix (Jr, Sr., III, etc.) if applicable.
- **Printed name of signer (optional, but useful for reviewing petitions).** Neatly write the name of the signer, doing it for them is best so it is legible.
- **Residence.** Petition signers need to give their **residential street address at which they are enrolled to vote** (No P.O. Box addresses).
- **County (NYC) or Town or City (Outside NYC).** In this box, write the TOWN or CITY if it is outside New York City. Write the COUNTY if it is inside New York City. Do not use village, county (outside New York City), or hamlet names. You can reference the voter enrollment list to verify this information. This is the most common mistake, so when reviewing petitions, pay close attention to this.

3. Statement of Witness

- The person passing the petition sheet must 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, even on a different day, but within the petitioning period. You must use the address at which you are registered with the Board of Elections to list on the petition, not your mailing address, if different.
 - 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 doesn't need to be the same as the date of the last signature on the page, but cannot be earlier.
 - Don't forget the “Witness Identification Information” below the signature and be sure to specify your town or city as it appears in the voter rolls.
 - **Do not fill in the "Sheet No.: _____"** at the bottom of the sheet. This will be filled in when binding the petitions, right before they are filed.

SUPPLIES FOR PETITIONING

1. **Obtain lists of the enrolled Libertarians for each county of the Judicial District in which the candidate is running.** Contact the Board of Elections (of each County in the JD, if more than one County, otherwise you can contact the State BOE <http://form.jotform.us/form/50913672751154>) to get a list of all enrolled Libertarians in the Judicial District, to include all fields. You will also want to specifically and additionally request phone numbers and emails, despite having asked for all fields. Bring this list with you when you petition.
2. **Make sure each petitioner has a reliable clipboard.**
3. **Ensure you have plenty of petition sheets.** You should print twice as many petition sheets as you would need to achieve your target. Place multiple copies of the petition sheet on your clipboard when you go knock on doors, with the petition page you are working to fill on top.
4. **Bring plenty of ballpoint pens.** Ballpoint pens help prevent the information from running if it becomes wet, which happens often in March in New York State and causes the writing to become illegible. Also, check to make sure the pen is working on a separate sheet of paper before use, because stray marks can cause confusion on petitions. Tie the pens to the clipboard to avoid losing them. Bring pens without caps as they tend not to get taken by mistake.
5. **(optional) Bring flyers/palm cards for you/the candidate(s).** You can give them to those signing the petition or even those who do not sign the petition as it helps promote the party, the candidates, and the upcoming election. This can also help recruit potential volunteers for the 2022 statewide petitioning drive.
6. **(optional) Bring “Sorry we missed you cards” with candidate information.** These can be business cards or door hangers, etc. but should indicate that you were there attempting to get signatures and how you can be reached if they want to sign, or that you will be back another time.

RULES FOR COLLECTING SIGNATURES

1. **Witnessing signatures.** Only enrolled New York State Libertarians and Notaries Public and Commissioners of Deeds can witness petition signatures. Notaries Public and Commissioners of Deeds must use a different witness statement on the petition, but can be enrolled in any party, or not registered to vote at all.
2. **Petition signatures.** Petition signers must be registered New York voters enrolled in the Libertarian Party and residing in the Judicial District.
3. If you have signed a petition for another candidate running for the SAME office, you cannot sign or witness signatures for ANOTHER candidate running for the same office. Once you sign for a candidate as a voter, you cannot witness signatures on petitions for another candidate for that same office. Signatures that you witnessed before signing for another candidate as a voter are valid.
4. If the voter has already signed a petition for another candidate or slate of candidates running for the SAME office, only the first petitions signed by the voter will be valid
5. **You cannot witness your own signature.** Have another enrolled Libertarian voter witness your signature on a new petition sheet.
6. **You must personally witness each signature you collect.** If a person offers to get a signature for another enrolled Libertarian without you present, then give them a blank petition sheet and have them fill out and sign the witness statement themselves.

COLLECTION OF SIGNATURES

When petitioning, be sure to **be friendly and courteous**. Don't get discouraged if someone declines to sign a petition; you don't need a lot of signatures. **Just move on to the next voter.**

1. Where to petition?

- a. Since only enrolled Libertarian voters can sign the petition and such voters are typically spread out, the best place to collect the signatures is by canvassing door-to-door in the district you are petitioning. It's recommended to drive to the voters at a convenient time and knock on their door. Alternatively, call ahead and schedule a time for you to meet the voter at their residence so they would be able to sign. It is recommended that when collecting signatures, to focus on one geographic area at a time, starting with the areas with the largest concentration of Libertarian voters.
- b. Events hosted by your Libertarian County Affiliate are great opportunities to gather many signatures as often many of them are eligible to sign a petition.

2. Dealing with Rejection

- a. You may find people who refuse to sign the petition. Don't argue with them, if the voter does not want to sign after discussing it, **don't get discouraged and just move on to the next voter.**
- b. If the voter declines for any reason, explain to them it's just to get the candidate(s) on the ballot; it does not mean you are promising to support or vote for them in the future. Most people will agree that anyone should have a chance to run for office and there should be more choices on the ballot, especially Libertarians.
- c. If the signer says that they have never heard of the candidate, give them a flyer/palm card (if available) about the candidate and ask them to sign.
- d. If you are told the person no longer lives at that residence, thank them for their time and move on. Remember, only enrolled Libertarians can sign. If they aren't on your list, **THEY CANNOT SIGN**.
- e. If someone says the voter is not available, ask for a better time to return for the signature. If they provide a time and you can make it over, make sure you do so. If it will only be a few minutes, offer to wait in your car until the voter is available.
- f. **DO NOT** let anyone sign "for" someone else. If someone offers to, politely thank them but advise them only the voter can legally sign the petition. If you realize someone signed for someone else, cross out the whole line and initial it as invalid.
- g. Remember not to be overbearing at the door. Knock three times, or ring the doorbell, and take a step back. If no one answers after 30 seconds, knock three times again and step back. If there is still no answer, leave your card and move on to the next voter. Even if you see someone is home, there is no reason to pester them to come to the door.

INCREASING EFFECTIVENESS AND SUCCESS IN COLLECTING SIGNATURES

1. **LEGIBILITY.** It is important that petitions are written neatly so they are readable. If the first signer makes a mistake, the other signers make the same mistakes (such as date or town). You can avoid this by having the voter sign the petition and then you can fill out the remaining information. Only the signature must be completed by the voter. Always check your sheet before giving the petition out to be signed again.
2. **BEFORE YOU LEAVE,** always check to make sure the signature is legible.
3. It is okay if the sheet is partially filled out. You don't need to fill a page with signatures, even just one signature on a page is acceptable. Any number of signatures is acceptable on a page as long as they are legible and all information matches the voter enrollment lists.
4. When a petition sheet is full, remove it from the clipboard and place it in your bag so it does not get damaged, lost, or stolen. Make sure the sheet does not get crumpled or folded if possible.
5. If you suspect there is an error and it is not a simple fix, it's best to set that petition sheet aside for now and handle it later. Start using a new sheet to prevent later signatures from being invalidated.
6. Similarly, if you have suspicions regarding the true identity of the voter, have them sign on a blank petition sheet and don't have any other voters sign on that sheet.

REVIEWING PETITION SHEETS AND MAKING CORRECTIONS

1. **DAILY, after you have finished petitioning, sit down and review the signatures again.** Check each line and verify the information matches the voter enrollment list exactly and correct any errors.
2. If a correction must be made to any field, cross out the wrong information with a single line and write in the correct information, then initial it.
3. Corrections cannot be made to a signature. If the signature is in error, have the voter sign again in the next available line or on a new sheet. Cross out the entire erroneous signature line with a single line and initial **both ends** of the cross out.
4. After the witness statement is signed, only the witness can make changes and insertions above their signature.

ORGANIZING AND SUBMISSION OF PETITION SHEETS

Make sure all petition sheets are gathered in one location to be reviewed and bound at the top of the page with a cover sheet.

1. **Cover sheet.** You will need a cover sheet on top of your petitions. Use the template provided by the Elections Oversight Committee.
2. **Numbering.** When numbering the petition sheets, **make sure they are in order before they are bound.** The cover sheet does not count in this numbering. If you have multiple volumes, you will need a cover sheet for each volume. In most cases, you will have one volume.
3. **Binding.** The petitions must be securely fastened together using prong fasteners (available at your local office supplier or online).
4. **Submission to Collector.** Petitions must be submitted to the Collector. **Details TBD.**
5. **Mail/Deliver Petitions.** Even though you can mail your petitions to the Collector you may hand deliver the petitions in person to ensure delivery. Request a receipt from the Collector to prove that they were filed in case of any challenges. If you are sending it by mail, **use certified mail.**

SCRIPTS

The following scripts may be helpful when petitioning.

SCRIPT FOR VOLUNTEERS.

You: Hello, my name is __[your name]__ with the Libertarian Party. Is __[name of voter]__ home?

If the voter is not home, say this, and make a note of a time to return.

You: What would be a good time to come back and speak to them?

If the voter is the person who answers the door or the person who answers gets the voter, say the following.

You: I am collecting signatures to get __[name of candidate]__ on the ballot for Libertarian Party of New York State Committee. Would you sign our petition?

If they say yes, give them the clipboard and point to the place where they put their signature.

If they say no, thank them for their time and move on to the next voter.

SCRIPT FOR CANDIDATES.

You: Hello, my name is __[your name]__ with the Libertarian Party. Is __[name of voter]__ home?

If the voter is not home, say this, and make a note of a time to return.

You: What would be a good time to come back and speak to them?

If the voter is the person who answers the door or the person who answers gets the voter, say the following.

You: I am running for Libertarian Party of New York State Committee and I need signatures to get on the ballot. Would you sign my petition?