

GREEN PARTY OF NEW YORK PETITIONING GUIDE

April 2022

GENERAL INFORMATION

1. **Independent petitions** refer to petitions to get a candidate on the ballot by collecting signatures from any registered voter.
2. **Petitioning period.** The petitioning period **STARTS** on **APRIL 19, 2022**, meaning no signatures can be taken prior to this date. The petitioning period **ENDS** on **MAY 31, 2022**, meaning no signatures can be taken after this date.
3. **Filing period.** The filing period is **MAY 24, 2022 THROUGH MAY 31, 2022**, meaning all petitions must be submitted to the **STATEWIDE PETITION COORDINATOR (Chris Edes, PO Box 31125, Rochester, NY 14603)** during this timeframe. Any signatures collected before or after the petitioning period are invalid.
4. **Target filing date.** Our target filing date is **MAY 31, 2022**. We will need all petitions turned in by at least **MAY 27, 2022**, so that they can be prepared for filing.
5. **Target number of signatures.** The Green Party will need to collect a total of 45,000 signatures **at minimum** to get the statewide candidates on the ballot. In case of challenges, we will need approximately 90,000 signatures.
6. **Help.** Contact your local Green Party affiliate for guidance as to where to petition, and the statewide petition coordinator at cedes@gpny.org for any questions regarding procedure or technical details of the petition process.
7. **Voter Database Lookup.** Visit our online voter database lookup at <http://fmc.alico.no-ip.org/fmi/iwp/cgi?-db=NYSVoters&-loadframes> to validate petition information. You will need an account created to use this. Please contact Allan Hunter to obtain a username and password. **DO NOT MAKE ANY CHANGES TO THE ACTUAL PETITION SHEETS.** We will have a team of election law experts vet proposed changes, when the time comes.
8. **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.

LAYOUT OF PETITION SHEETS

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. The signature is the only part that you cannot fill in for another person.

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 April 25th on line 5 and then have someone sign on line 7 with the date of April 22nd. 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.

Signature Area, continued

- **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.

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. **Make sure each petitioner has a reliable clipboard.**
2. **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.
3. **Bring plenty of ballpoint pens.** Ballpoint pens help prevent the information from running if it becomes wet, which happens often in April 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. Use a ballpoint pen with blue (or black) ink.
4. **(optional) Bring flyers/palm cards/business cards for you/the candidate(s).** They can be given to those signing the petition or those who do not sign the petition as it helps promote the party, the candidates, and the election. This can also help recruit potential volunteers for the 2022 statewide petitioning drive.

RULES FOR COLLECTING SIGNATURES

1. **Witnessing signatures.** Only registered New York State voters 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 State voters. Party enrollment does not matter.
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 New York State 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 voter without you present, then give them a blank petition sheet and have them fill out and sign the witness statement themselves.
7. **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.

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 to the next voter.**

1. Where to petition?

- a. Since any registered voter can sign the petition, you can collect signatures from many different kinds of places, in which 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. If you plan on petitioning on private property, get permission from the property owner.
- 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 line sees that and may also decline. The same goes for crowds that may be facing one direction. Start in the back.
- c. Events hosted by your local Green Party chapter are great opportunities to gather many signatures as often many of them are eligible to sign a petition.

2. Dealing with Rejection

- a. 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.
- b. 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.
- c. 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.
- d. You will 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.**

INCREASING EFFECTIVENESS AND SUCCESS IN COLLECTING SIGNATURES

1. **LEGIBILITY.** It is important that everything on the petitions is 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. 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.
3. 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.
4. 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.
5. 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 is correct to the best of your ability (town name, county name). You can also get help from your local chapter or the Statewide Petition Coordinator.
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. **Cross out the signature completely so there is no confusion about it, otherwise it may be counted and another valid signature disqualified.**
4. After the witness statement is signed, only the witness can make changes and insertions above their signature.

ORGANIZING AND SUBMISSION OF PETITION SHEETS

After you review your petition sheets and they are ready to be submitted, make sure to get them either to your **County Petition Contact** or directly to the **Statewide Petition Coordinator**. The names and contact information for all County Petition Contacts can be found here:

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/16QB8w6Dnx5Ij6RU60Bco7cyvglBCINAzf6oeBYsCNTI/view>

You **DO NOT** need a cover sheet as that will be provided by the team binding the petitions. **DO NOT** number the petition sheets either. This will also be done by the team binding the petitions.

1. Once you have completed your petition sheets, turn your petitions in to your County Petition Contact if you have made arrangements.
2. Your County Petition Contact can help you check the petition sheets in order to correct errors, including the correctness of count, legitimacy of town or city, and most importantly, that the witness statement has been completed and is accurate. The County Coordinator can then turn in multiple petitioners' sheets to the State Petition Collector. Turn your petitions in on a daily basis. If not possible, turn in petitions no less than on a weekly basis.
3. It is important for the County Petition Contact to have a running count of the number of signatures collected in the county so this can be reported to the Statewide Petition Coordinator to assess the current progress of the petitioning effort.
4. If you have not made arrangements with your County Petition Contact or have a County Petition Contact, you can mail your petitions on weekly basis directly to the State Petition Collector.
5. The primary purpose of the prompt examination is to notify the individual petitioner of any mistakes so that the errors of the first week of petitioning are not repeated through the remaining weeks.
6. **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.
7. Submission to Collector. Ultimately, petitions must be submitted to the **STATEWIDE PETITION COORDINATOR (Chris Edes, PO Box 31125, Rochester, NY 14603)**
8. Mail/Deliver Petitions. Even though you can mail your petitions to the Collector you may hand-deliver the petitions in-person to ensure delivery. If you are sending by mail, use **Priority Mail** with the free flat rate envelope you can get at the post office. Do not require a signature for delivery when sending to the Statewide Petition Coordinator as the address is a P.O. Box.