



December 22, 2024

Qualifying Deadlines and Procedure

Dear Reader:

The following document was created from the CTAS website (ctas.tennessee.edu). This website is maintained by CTAS staff and seeks to represent the most current information regarding issues relative to Tennessee county government.

We hope this information will be useful to you; reference to it will assist you with many of the questions that will arise in your tenure with county government. However, the *Tennessee Code Annotated* and other relevant laws or regulations should always be consulted before any action is taken based upon the contents of this document.

Please feel free to contact us if you have questions or comments regarding this information or any other CTAS website material.

Sincerely,

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Reference Number: CTAS-863

Candidates are required to qualify for an election by certain statutorily prescribed times. Although these times vary in certain circumstances, the default rule is that a candidate must qualify by 12 noon, prevailing time, on the third Thursday in the third calendar month before an election or a primary. T.C.A. § 2-5-101. However, there are a number of exceptions based on the office sought and whether or not a primary is being held. For information on specific qualifying deadlines for any election or primary it is always advisable to call the county election commission, regarding local elections, or the state coordinator of elections regarding state elections.

Candidates for some offices are required to file certified duplicate copies of the original nominating petition. For example, candidates for statewide offices, as well as for representative to the U.S. Congress, must file the original petition with the State Election Commission and file duplicates with the coordinator of elections and the party's state executive committee (for primary candidates only). T.C.A. § 2-5-103. Candidates for other offices must file the original nominating petition with the county election commission in the county of residence, and file duplicates with the election commissions of all counties served by the office which the candidate seeks. T.C.A. § 2-5-104.

Candidates for chief administrative officer of county highway departments are required to certify their qualifications under the County Uniform Highway Law by filing affidavits with the Tennessee Highway Officials Certification Board at least 14 days before the qualifying deadline. This board is responsible for certifying that the qualifications are acceptable. This certification, which is filed with the qualifying petition, is required before the candidate's name may be placed on the ballot. All correspondence with this board should be submitted through the office of the coordinator of elections. T.C.A. § 54-7-104.

Any candidate for a judicial office that must be filled by an attorney must certify that he or she is licensed to practice law in this state and must place his or her supreme court registration number on the nominating petition. T.C.A. § 2-5-106.

Similarly to highway officials, sheriffs must file certain materials with the POST Commission 14 days prior to the qualifying deadline for election to the office of sheriff. The POST Commission is responsible for certifying to the election commission that the qualifications are acceptable. This certification is required before the candidate's name may be placed on the ballot. See T.C.A. § 8-8-102 for more details on these requirements.

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