

Federal Campaigns

Filing for Office and Campaign Finance Compliance

Getting on the Ballot:

All candidates for national or state office must file with the [Secretary of State's office](#).

Candidates can file to run for office in one of the following ways:

1. Completing a Candidate's Declaration of Intent form and paying the required filing fee.
OR
2. Filing by petition.

Filing by Declaration and Fee

- This is as simple as filling out a Candidate's Declaration of Intent form and delivering it to the correct office.
 - The candidate's signature on the form must be attested by an election official, either in the Secretary of State's office or your local county office.
 - The best practice for candidates seeking office is to personally visit the Secretary of State's office in Topeka to ensure proper attestation.
 - You can find a copy of the Declaration of Intent form [HERE](#).
- In addition to properly filing your Declaration of Intent form, you will also need to pay the appropriate filing fee for the office you're seeking.
- The filing fees for state offices for 2026 are as follows:
 - **U.S. SENATE & U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES** | Primary candidates must pay a fee equal to one percent of the salary of the office plus a \$20 administrative fee.

Filing by Petition

- Candidates for federal offices may also file to run for office by submitting a petition to the proper office before the filing deadline.
- Candidates for U.S. Senate must have signatures of one percent (1%) of the party's total voter registration.
- Candidates for U.S. House of Representatives must have signatures of two percent (2%) of the party's total voter registration from the district. So for example, if your district has 1,000 registered Democrats, you need 20 signatures of registered Democrats in order to qualify to appear on the ballot.
- To determine the exact number of signatures required to file by petition, please reach out to the appropriate filing office: Secretary of State for state offices and County Elections Offices for local offices.
- The KDP recommends you collect and file at least 30% more signatures than the required amount.

- Petitions should be delivered to the Secretary of State.
- If you file by petition, you will also be required to pay a small administrative fee.
- You can find a copy of the petition form [HERE](#).

Helpful Notes and Resources

- ***The filing deadline for the 2026 cycle is Monday, June 1 at 12:00pm.***
- A state candidate is not considered filed until their petition or declaration and fee is received by the Secretary of State ([K.S.A. 25-208](#)). Candidates must file by petition or filing fee.
- You are legally considered a political candidate in Kansas when you: (1) appoint a treasurer or a candidate committee; (2) make “a public announcement of intention to seek nomination or election to state or local office”; (3) pay or receive any amount of money in furtherance of being nominated for candidacy or elected to office; or (4) file “a declaration or petition to become a candidate for state or local office.
- You can find more information about these topics by downloading the following documents made available by the Secretary of State:
 - [Kansas Election Standards -- Chapter IV. Candidates](#)
 - [Kansas Election Standards -- Chapter V. Petitions](#)
- You can contact the Secretary of State’s office by phone at 800-262-VOTE(8683)
- **Federal campaigns must register and file campaign finance reports with the Federal Election Commission (FEC). You can find a wealth of information on their website designed specifically for candidates [HERE](#).**
- The FEC will consider you a candidate once you have raised or spent more than \$5,000 in contributions or expenditures.
- You are allowed to “Test the Waters” without campaigning and triggering FEC registration and reporting requirements. Examples of permissible testing the waters activities include conducting polling, traveling and making telephone calls to determine whether the individual should become a candidate. You may not hold yourself out as a candidate - for example creating a website that say “Smith for Senate 2026” without triggering the requirement to register with the FEC. Details about “Testing the Waters” can be found on the FEC website [HERE](#).

Appoint a Treasurer

- Every political committee must designate a treasurer before it can accept contributions or make expenditures. Designate your treasurer on your [Statement of Organization](#).
- Treasurers must ensure committee reports and statements are complete, accurate and timely. This is a significant responsibility—if there’s an enforcement action against a committee, the treasurer is usually named as a respondent. Treasurers can be found officially (or, in some circumstances, personally) liable for the actions they take.
- Treasurers responsibilities include:
 - Sign and file all committee reports and statements.

- Deposit receipts in the committee’s designated bank within 10 days of receipt.
- Authorize expenditures or appoint someone else (orally or in writing) to authorize expenditures.
- Monitor contributions, ensuring they comply with legal limits and prohibitions.
- Keep records of receipts and disbursements for three years from the filing date of the report to which they relate.
- A candidate can choose to act as his or her own committee treasurer.

You can find more information about appointing treasurers [HERE](#).

Getting Your Finances In Order:

All of your political committee’s funds should be managed in a segregated bank account, not commingled with any personal, business, or other funds.

Political committee accounts are often set up as Demand Deposit Accounts (DDAs) or Business Checking Accounts at most banks. These types of accounts require you to have an Employer Identification Number (or EIN, sometimes referred to as a Tax ID). An EIN is like a social security number for your business. Political committee officers should obtain an EIN prior to opening their bank account and to further help segregate their personal finances from those of their organization.

Not only do most banks require political committees to have an EIN to set up an account, ActBlue and NGP do as well.

Obtaining an EIN

1. Visit the IRS website using this link:
<https://www.irs.gov/businesses/small-businesses-self-employed/apply-for-an-employer-identification-number-ein-online>
 - a. This web page and the links therein will provide additional information about EINs
2. Click the blue “**Apply Online Now**” button, then click “**Begin Application**” on the subsequent page.
3. On Step 1 (Identify tab), select “**View Additional Types, Including Tax-Exempt and Governmental Organizations**” then click “Continue”
 - a. On the next page, select “**Political Organization**” then click “Continue”
 - b. Review the information provided then click “Continue”.
 - c. On the next page, select “**Banking Purposes**” when asked why you are requesting an EIN. Then click “Continue”.

4. On Step 2 (Authenticate tab), provide your personal information, including your name and social security number. Check the box that confirms you are a duly authorized officer, then click “Continue”
5. On Step 3 (Address tab), provide the mailing address for your organization. If your organization does not have a physical office space, it is best to use the home address of your Chair or Treasurer. Click “Continue”
6. On Step 4 (Details tab), provide the requested information for your organization.
 - a. Select “**December**” under the “**Closing Month of Account Year**” option
 - b. Select “No” when asked “Will you file Form 8871 under Sec 527?”
 - c. Click “Continue”
 - d. On the next page, you will be asked “if you have or expect to have any employees who will receive Forms W-2 in the next 12 months?”. Most organizations/campaigns should be able to select “No” here. Please note that the KDP offers Payroll Services for full-time employees to affiliated organizations/campaigns, which could allow you to select “No” here as well. Click “Continue”
 - e. On the final Step 5 (Confirmation tab), select “**Receive letter online**” then click “Continue”. Your EIN number and confirmation letter will be provided electronically.

Open a Bank Account

- Once you’ve obtained your EIN, you should be able to open an account at a bank of your choosing.
- Please note that some banks have different requirements for opening and maintaining accounts, and some may require additional documentation or information. In most cases, your personal ID documents, EIN documentation, and funds for the opening balance should be sufficient.
- When shopping around for a suitable bank, it is best to inquire about minimum balance requirements, monthly fees, and paper transaction fees.
- This account should not collect interest. Most banks would know how to do this.
- Look for a bank with lower wire transfer fees and ideally could wire past 2 PM.

ActBlue for Federal Political Committees

ActBlue is often used by smaller organizations because there is no start-up fee or recurring billing. ActBlue fees plus credit card processing fees equal ~3.95% of each contribution processed. ActBlue aggregates contributions in the form of a weekly check, which is mailed to you, while removing and collecting fees separately for you to report and pulls fees separately after the contributions are deposited to make reporting easier.

ActBlue offers very basic features, not limited to, but primarily consisting of the features listed in the bullet points above. The simplicity of the software makes it very user friendly. Contribution

spreadsheets can be easily downloaded that include all reporting information. ActBlue has a responsive support team to assist with things like refunds and general questions.

If you would like to set up an ActBlue account go to https://secure.actblue.com/pending_entities/new or you can contact ActBlue's associate for Kansas, Carolyn Schuette, at cschuette@actblue.com.

Financial Disclosures

- To ensure that your committee sticks to the set financial reporting schedule and is generally complying with federal campaign finance laws, it is of paramount importance that you create a record-keeping system for your campaign's finances as soon as possible. Your campaign must ensure the maintenance of detailed information and original source documentation for all receipts, expenditures, and any other financial responsibilities.
- Federal candidates must file quarterly candidate reports with the FEC. For more information on filing your reports, check the FEC page [HERE](#).