



Grassroots Candidate Guide

Designating Petitions for County Committee

Step 1: Make sure that you are eligible to run and/or circulate petitions

To look up your voter registration, visit the following website: <http://voterlookup.elections.state.ny.us/> Do not assume that this information is up-to-date; everyone should double-check their registration information.

To run for a County Committee member, you must be a registered member of the political party and live within the Assembly District where you are running. To circulate petitions for a candidate, you must be a registered member of the party within New York state.

When you check your voter registration, be certain that the party listed is correct and your address is also correct. This information must match identically to what you fill out on your petitions.

Step 2: Get a walking list of voters in your district and copies of the correct designating petition.

To obtain a customized set of designating petitions from Grassroots Initiative, send an email to info@gograssroots.org or contact us by phone at (212) 400-0531. Petitions should include your political party and county on the top (for example "Designating Petition - Democratic Party - New York County").

Grassroots Initiative can also provide you with a fee list of registered members of your party in the district where you are running. If you prefer a list that is filtered to include only voters who voted in the most recent Presidential election, Grassroots Initiative can create this list for a small fee (\$20 per election district).

Step 3: Find a running mate (optional)

Every election district in New York has at least two county committee persons and candidates for these offices are allowed to gather petition signatures together. Therefore, it is recommended that you find a running mate from your election district that can run for the other open position. The signature requirement for your designating petition will not change and therefore, if you divide up your work, you should be able to collect your signatures in half the time.

Step 4: Complete the top section of your designating petition in advance.

Print your name (and the name of you or running mate, if applicable) under the heading "Name of Candidate", fill in your Election District number and Assembly District number in the box labeled "Political Office", enter your full address(es) (including the city, state, and zip code) under the heading "Place of Residence".

Confused? Have Questions?

Grassroots Initiative is available to help. Please feel free to contact our office at (212) 400-0531 or via email at info@gograssroots.org if you get confused or run into problems. You can also visit our website at www.gograssroots.org for additional resources and useful information.

The top portion of the petition will be the same for every page. Fill this out in advance before gathering signatures and then make all the copies you need.

Step 5: Know how many signatures you need to gather.

You will need to have your petition by 5% of the enrolled party members in the election district (on average, about 20 signatures) Always gather more signatures than required in case some are invalidated. For the exact number of signatures, you can contact Grassroots Initiative at info@gograssroots.org or by phone at (212) 400-0531.

Step 6: Review the rules for gathering signatures and get your walking lists and materials.

Before you start gathering signatures, please carefully review the general tips and rules provided at the end of this document. This will help you prevent common mistakes that can disqualify petitions.

In addition, you will need the following materials:

- (1) A copy of your designating petitions with the top section completed in advance
- (2) Blue or Black Pens
- (3) A “walking list”: (names and addresses of registered party members in your election district)
- (4) Clipboard or stiff material to write upon

Step 7: Gather your signatures.

Start gathering your signatures by going door-to-door using the walking list of registered party members in your election district. Please be aware that although the lists you receive from Grassroots Initiative are the “official” voter lists from the Board of Elections, a number of people on the list may have moved or even deceased. A sample door-knocking script is provided below.

Hello, my name is _____. May I speak to _____? I am seeking a position in the [Democratic/Republican/other] party County Committee for [Brooklyn/the Bronx/Queens/Manhattan/Staten Island]. I am collecting signatures to allow my name to be placed on the ballot for the election on _____. Would you please sign for me?

Many voters may not understand what the petitioning procedure is all about. When they first show hesitation about signing, don't give up immediately. You may respond by clarifying.

You're not committing to vote for anybody by signing this petition. Your just supporting the democratic process and allowing my right to run for office by being on the ballot. Will you sign to support my right to run for political office and our right to have a choice of who to vote for?

If the voter asks questions about your background, be prepared to give a very short answer as to why you are the best candidate. You should also feel free to clarify that the majority of these county committee seats are vacant because of a shortage of candidates and as result many communities are left without any representation.

The information contained in this document is provided as a service to first-time candidates and does not constitute legal advice. Although we go to great lengths to make sure our information is accurate and useful, we recommend you consult a lawyer if you want professional assurance that our information, and your interpretation of it, is appropriate to your particular situation.

If the answer is still no, politely thank the voter for his or her time, and go on to the next house or apartment

Five Steps to get an accurate signature

- (1) Be certain that the person signing is a registered member of your party in the election district where you are running.
- (2) Put the date in the first column.*
- (3) Have them sign their name in cursive.
- (4) Neatly print their name on the line below their signature.*
- (5) Neatly print their street address in the column labeled "Residence"*

** Please note: you are allowed to print the date, name and address of the petition signer for them. This may be preferable to ensure legibility and a match with the information on your voter list.*

Step 8: After you are finished gathering signatures, complete the "Statement of Witness" on the bottom of the designating petition.

After you (or another petition carrier) have gathered a page of signatures (note you do not need to gather all ten signatures on each page) the petition carrier must complete the "Statement of Witness" by printing his/her name in the first space, printing his/her street address in the section blank space, writing in the total number of signatures gathered, and then dating and signing at the bottom. Leave the space labeled "Sheet No." blank if you are submitting your petition to Grassroots Initiative to file with the Board of Elections. Page numbers will be completed once the petition sheets are assembled and bound.

Step 9: Mail your completed petitions to Grassroots Initiative in advance of the filing deadline.

Send all completed petitions to Grassroots Initiative at the address below. You must submit originals; photocopies cannot be accepted.

**Grassroots Initiative
224 W. 4th Street, Suite 200
New York, NY 10013**

If you cannot meet the deadline or wish to submit your petitions directly to the Board of Elections, please contact Grassroots Initiative at (212) 400-0531.

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RULES FOR GATHERING SIGNATURES

- (1) Candidates do not have to gather the petition signatures on their own but may choose to do so. Petition carriers must be residents in the state of New York and registered and enrolled voters in your political party before they carry a petition.
- (2) All petition signers must be members of your political party who are registered to vote in the election district where you are running.
- (3) Petitions may be carried 24 hours a day, seven days a week, during the designated period (generally June to mid-July in New York). For exact dates, you can contact Grassroots Initiative at info@gograssroots.org or by phone at (212) 400-0531.
- (4) The law requires that the voter must identify himself to the petition carrier to be the individual who signed the petition sheet. Thus, using your voter list ask for the voter by name: "Hello. My name is _____, may I speak to _____?"
- (5) Petition carriers must actually see the petition being signed by the voter.
- (6) All signatures must be in *blue* or *black ink*. **Never use pencil.**
- (7) Persons should sign the petitions with the same name that they used when registering to vote. No one may sign for another person. Women must sign their own first name and not their spouses. Do not use titles (Mr., Mrs., Dr., etc.)
- (8) The date and address should be filled in when the voter signs the petitions
- (9) The Law requires that the only thing the voter must fill out on the petition sheet is his or her signature. The petition carrier can fill in all the remaining information, including the date and addresses. **We suggest that the voter's signature is the only information that should be filled out by the voter on the petition. Before the voter signs, you should print clearly and legibly on the petition, in the voter's presence, the date, the voter's address and print the voter's name in the appropriate spaces.** However it is not wrong or incorrect for the voter to fill in all the information him or herself. If the voter desires to do so, let the voter fill in the information. Just be sure the date, the address and the printed name are correct and legible and that the voter signs on the correct line/
- (10) **Do not erase, cross out or white out errors.** If in error or in doubt, cross out the entire line and go to the next line below the line and have them sign properly. **Do not try to correct mistakes after you have left the voter.**
- (11) Do not abbreviate names or addresses. Never use ditto marks. Write out the name of the month for the date.
- (12) **Petition Carriers cannot sign a petition sheet that they are carrying, because you cannot witness the collection of your own signature.** You may sign a different page of the petition if it is gathered and witnessed by a different person
- (13) Make sure the petition signer has the opportunity to read the entire petition. Let the signer take as much time as they wish to read all the language on the petition.

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