

LOUISVILLE



DEMOCRATIC PARTY

Steps to Filing for Office in Louisville Kentucky

Kentucky Registry of Election Finance (KREF)

NOTE: This needs to be done first before filing for office. For state races, the SOS will not let you file for office without it. Local clerks might let you file, but it is a best practice to file with KREF first.

If you have filed for office, and have not yet filed your spending intent with KREF, you will not be able to open a bank account and **must NOT raise money** for your race until you have filed a statement of spending intent.

Statement of Spending Intent

Before you file your statement of spending intent

- Decide on Committee Name
 - Committee Name:
 - Make it simple: your full name, role you are running for.
 - Examples: Greg Fischer for Mayor;
 - Bill Hollander for Metro Council 9
- Decide on website domain, campaign email address, banking institution, and committee chair and/or treasurer.
 - Website:
 - You can never go wrong with your full name and the role you are running for.
 - Without your first and last name, it will be much more difficult to find your website by search.
 - Email:
 - This is an email address from your domain that allows the public to reach out to your campaign. Do not use your personal email address here. It

could be structured as info@yourcampaignwebsite.com or if you do not have a website yet, yourcampaign@gmail.com

- Remember to look at your campaign email. You will have organizations and the Democratic Party reaching out to you there for surveys, endorsements, etc.
- o Bank:
- o Treasurer:
 - **NOTE** on choosing a treasurer. Ideally, this is your most organized friend or volunteer who takes this role. They do not need to be an accountant or bookkeeper, but some familiarity with spreadsheets and/or data entry will be helpful.
- Ideally, reserve a PO Box with the USPS. Use the PO Box for all publicly disclosed addresses. (this is not essential, but do it if you have time before filing)
 - o PO Box _____

File with the Kentucky Registry of Election Finance

- Instructions for first time candidates along with video support can be viewed [here](#).
- Create a Ky.gov account for candidate and treasurer [here](#).
- Create a statement of intent to raise/spend more than \$3,000 by going [here](#). You also can say you are not raising more than \$3000, but it is not recommended
 - o Click on the purple “Start Statement of Spending Intent” and select your office you are running for.
 - o Follow instructions for creating a committee and appointing a treasurer (or committee chair if you are running for judge).
- Once the committee chair and/or treasurer signs the Statement of Intent the campaign committee must track contributions/disbursements and the Statement of Intent becomes public on the KREF website.
- Select a local banking institution. You do not have to have an account there already, this is where you think you will be banking. Yes, you can change it from what is on the paperwork if needed.

Filing to Run for Office

NOTE: This is important, and it is where candidates often make mistakes with filing.

- You will be asked for voters to sign your filing papers. The language is often confusing in directions of who those people can be.
- They must be for all races:
 - A registered voter.
 - They must be of the same party as you are running for if it is a partisan office.
 - In the district you are running.

Qualifications for roles and filing fees

Where do you file- Jefferson County Clerk or Secretary of State in Frankfort?

Candidates for the following offices shall file with the county clerk to attain ballot access and should contact the county clerk of their county of residence for filing procedures and requirements:

Circuit Clerk, Commonwealth Attorney in single county circuits, County Judge Executive, County Clerk, County Attorney, Sheriff, Jailer, Coroner, Property Valuation Administrator, Surveyor, Magistrate/Justice of the Peace, County Commissioner, Constable, Soil and Water Conservation District Supervisor, Mayor, City Legislative Body, and Board of Education.

Candidates for the following offices shall file with the Office of the Secretary of State:

President of the United States, Vice President of the United States, United States Senator, United States Representative in Congress, Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Secretary of State, Attorney General, Auditor of Public Accounts, State Treasurer, Commissioner of Agriculture, State Senator, State Representative, Supreme Court Justice, Judge of the Court of Appeals, Circuit Judge, District Judge, and Commonwealth Attorney in multi-county circuits.

- The latest date to file with the Kentucky Secretary of State is January 9, 2026 at 4 pm local time.
- Download Filing Papers for all roles [Here](#)
- Make sure you get copies of your filing papers when you file.

Opening a bank account for your campaign

NOTES:

- Opening political checking accounts does not happen often for banking staff. It is not uncommon that candidates will be told that they need to have an LLC or a DBA with the KY SOS to open a checking account. This is not accurate. Your EIN with the IRS and statement of intent with KREF is all you need to open a checking account. You may find that some banks will not do these kinds of accounts.
- Some banks will ask if you would like to utilize their merchant account services for accepting credit card contributions. Decline these services as they will be provided by your online contribution processing service.

Steps to opening a bank account

- Using the information from the Statement of Spending Intent apply for an Employer Identification Number [here](#).
 - Step-by-step guide for selecting the correct EIN type [here](#).
 - Print copy of EIN letter.
 - Record deposit required to open the account as a contribution from either candidate or committee chair in your records.
- Request a letter (in both print and electronic versions) from the bank on letterhead with your committee name, address, routing number, and account number. You will need this for credit card processing and other vendor services later.
- Order checks, and it is wise to have a debit card as many campaign services require it for payment.

Signing up for ActBlue or other candidate contribution platform

Actblue is the most common democratic campaign contribution platform. There are others, but it is essential to use a platform that is for campaign donations to make sure the appropriate data is collected on donors for your campaign reporting requirements.

NOTE: Do not use venmo, paypal, gofundme, etc. Also, taking cash for donations has very strict limits, and it is a best practice to have people donate via check or an online donation platform

Info about signing up for Actblue, [here](#)

Campaign donation accounting platforms

We recommend having a platform to track your donations and expenditures that is designed

for campaign use. These platforms usually have CRMs (constituent relationship managers) built in that allow mass emailing, have forms built into them for building your volunteer list

The Louisville Democratic Party uses Campaign Deputy, which is a Kentucky company. It has some additional features you can opt into for automatically uploading your financial data to the KREF platform as well as automating your actblue donations directly into the platform, omitting a large amount of data entry. You can learn more about them [here](#)

Campaign Fundraising information and reporting requirements.

There is more information to know about campaign finance– but below are topics we see candidates having questions or confusion about most frequently.

- Contributions must be tracked and reported to the Kentucky Registry of Election Finance. If a Statement of Intent is signed before December 1, 2025 the campaign committee will be required to file an annual report of all campaign activity from the date the Statement of Intent was signed to December 1, 2025. The annual report must be submitted to the Kentucky Registry of Election Finance by 11:59 pm CST on December 3, 2025.
- The contribution limits for the 2026 cycle will be \$2,200 per election cycle (this means if you have a primary, an individual can donate \$2200 for the primary, and then can do so again for the general election) .
- **The following must be recorded for all contributions:** First Name, Last Name, Full Address, Employer, Occupation, Receipt Date, Amount. Aggregate contribution totals for all contributors must be tracked.
 - o Unitemized contributions are from \$0.01 to \$100.00 and will not disclose contributor information on the required KREF reports.
 - o Itemized contributions from \$100.01 to \$2,200.00 will disclose contributor information.

KREF electronic filing requires that all required contributor information be collected and entered in the system. Contributors lacking employer/occupation will be rejected. **Please note: nonapplicable or NA is not acceptable for employer/occupation fields in KREF. If a person lists retired for an occupation report “not employed” or “retired” in the employer field.**

Donations must be from individuals or from qualified organizations (these would be political action committees, democratic caucuses, state or county parties), not LLCs or businesses.

[Please refer here](#) for more information on contribution limits as other topics about campaign finance.

KREF is here to help candidates. If you need support, reach out to them at : 502.573.2226

Additional campaign resources

Check out our candidate information on our website [here](#)

Appreciations

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