



Candidate Guide

**City Attorney
District Attorney
Sheriff
Treasurer
Board of Education
Community College Board
BART Board (Districts 7 and 9)**

November 5, 2024, General Election

Nomination Period occurs July 15 – August 9

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I. Introduction

This candidate guide has been prepared by the San Francisco Department of Elections (the Department) to provide candidates for City Attorney, District Attorney, Sheriff, Treasurer, Board of Education, Community College Board and BART Board of Directors with information about nomination-related processes. The information within this guide is not all-encompassing. In the event there is a conflict between this guide and the law, regulation, or rule, the statutory requirements shall apply. As such, candidates, committees, and campaign staff should also examine the applicable laws and regulations. Candidates who do not meet every filing requirement within the nomination filing process will not be eligible to appear on the ballot, as there are no extensions or provisions for missed or late filings.

The Department recommends that anyone filing for candidacy:

- **Begin the process as early as possible.** This will ensure that you do not miss important deadlines or neglect to submit paperwork that may be important to your candidacy. The Department recommends allotting at least 30 minutes for a nomination filing. Department personnel will provide you with the necessary forms and documents, conduct intake of all documents and fees, and assist you with questions related to the nomination process.
- **Schedule an appointment with Department personnel**, using our online appointment form: sfelections.org/tools/csappt or contact us by phone. The Department will prepare documents ahead of time, answer any questions you may have, and expedite your visit.

**San Francisco Department of Elections
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Pl, Rm 48
San Francisco, CA 94102
(415) 554-4375**

Office hours: Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

II. Candidate Resources

In addition to this guide, the Department encourages candidates and campaigns to familiarize themselves with other important resources:

- A. The Department hosts Candidate Workshops on such topics as signatures-in-lieu-of-filing fees, nomination procedures, and voter registration drives.
- B. The Department’s website, sfelections.sfgov.org contains information for candidates and voters, including registration and voting calendars, details about ranked-choice voting, opportunities to observe elections processes, and up-to-date results reports from Election Night through certification of the results.
- C. Candidates may apply to purchase voter registration information for election-related purposes.
- D. The San Francisco Ethics Commission publishes a general candidate guide that explains state and local requirements concerning campaign finance and campaign disclosure; the Ethics Commission and the Fair Political Practices Commission (FPPC) also provide information regarding laws that govern political literature and advertising.
- E. The California Secretary of State (SOS) and FPPC play a role in the administration and enforcement of laws regulating candidates and elections. The FPPC has created “Campaign Disclosure Manual 2”, available online at fppc.ca.gov which details filing and disclosure requirements for local candidates.

This guide will reference the various state and local laws that regulate nomination processes. The table below lists the citations to these laws and regulations referenced in this guide.

Code References: <i>the following abbreviations are used throughout this guide for citations of supporting legal codes</i>	
CA Const.	California Constitution
CAEC	California Elections Code
CA Gov. Code	California Government Code
CA Admin. Code	California Administrative Code
CCR	California Code of Regulations
SFC	San Francisco Charter
SFC&GCC	S.F. Campaign and Governmental Conduct Code
SFMEC	San Francisco Municipal Elections Code
SOS	Secretary of State
FPPC	Fair Political Practices Commission

III. Important Dates

Date	Description	Code Provision(s)
<i>Open until the end of Nomination Period</i>	Declaration of Intention to Solicit or Accept Contributions for Local Office & Declaration of Candidacy The period during which candidates can file initial paperwork to run for local office. Candidates must file their declaration of candidacy on the same day as they file for their declaration to accept or solicit campaign contributions.	SFMEC §201 SFGC §1.122(a)
05 / 16 / 2024 – 07 / 10 / 2024 E-173 – E-118	Signatures-in-Lieu-of-Filing Fees The period during which candidates can pick up and file signatures-in-lieu-of-filing fees petition forms to pay for all or part of their filing fees by obtaining signatures of qualified voters.	CAEC §§8061, 8101, 8105(b), 8106, 10220; SFMEC §§205(b), 230, 840
07 / 01 / 2024 – 07 / 10 / 2024 E-127 – E-118	Declaration of Intention to Become a Candidate Form The period during which judicial candidates must file their Declaration of Intention form with the Department of Elections. The Department will assign a seat number to candidates at the time of filing for record keeping purposes. Candidates must pay the filing fee in full at this time. Signatures-in-lieu of-the-filing fee forms will not be accepted after the Declaration of Intention is filed. The filing fee is nonrefundable.	CAEC §§8101, 8105(b), 8200, 8201, 8202, 8023(a), 8104 - 8106
07 / 11 / 2024 – 07 / 15 / 2024 E-117 – E-113	Declaration of Intention: Extension Period If an incumbent has not filed a Declaration of Intent, any person other than the incumbent may file a Declaration of Intent during the extension period.	CAEC §10225
07 / 15 / 2024 – 08 / 09 / 2024 E-113 – E-88	Nomination Period The period during which candidates may obtain and file Nomination-related Documents and a Declaration of Candidacy. A candidate shall not be required to execute a Nomination Petition if the number of in-lieu signatures meets the requirements for nomination signatures.	CAEC §§10220 - 10228, 10510 - 10516, 10602 - 10604; SFMEC §§200 - 260
08 / 10 / 2024, noon – 08 / 20 / 2024, noon E-87 – E-77	Public Examination Period: Candidate Materials Period of public review and possible legal challenge of candidate legal names, candidate qualification statements, ballot designations, and translated or transliterated Chinese names submitted by candidates.	SFMEC §590(a)
09 / 09 / 2024 – 10 / 25 / 2024 E-57 – E-14	Statement of Write-In Candidacy and Nomination Papers During this period, write-in candidates for local office must file their Statements of Write-In Candidacy and Nomination Papers with the Department of Elections.	CAEC §8601, 8602

** If the legal deadline falls on a Saturday, Sunday or holiday, the deadline will move forward to the next working day.
CA Gov. Code §6707*

IV. Office Information and Candidate Eligibility

CAEC §§13.5, 201; SFC §§6.100, 13.106

Each candidate for local elective office in San Francisco must be a resident and registered to vote in San Francisco when nomination documents are issued and, if elected, throughout the term of office. If a candidate or elected official moves, he or she must complete a new voter registration form.

A. City Attorney

SFC §§6.100, 6.103

The City Attorney represents the City and County in legal proceedings with respect to which it has an interest; provided that any elected officer, department head, board or commission may engage counsel other than the City Attorney for legal advice regarding a particular matter where the elected officers department head, board or commission has reason to believe that the City Attorney may have a prohibited financial conflict of interest under California law or a prohibited ethical conflict of interest under the California Rules of Professional Conduct with regard to the matter. The City Attorney shall be licensed to practice law in all courts of the State of California and shall have been so licensed for at least **five years** next preceding his or her election and shall not engage in the private practice of law during the period they serve as elective officers of the City and County.

B. District Attorney

SFC §§6.100, 6.103

The District Attorney investigates all allegations of violations of laws which the District Attorney has the power to prosecute in court or before any other trier of fact; prosecutes all criminal cases in the appropriate courts and issue warrants for the arrest of persons charged with crimes to be prosecuted in such courts; and proceeds in such civil cases as authorized by state law. The District Attorney shall be licensed to practice law in all courts of the State of California and shall have been so licensed for at least five years next preceding his or her election. Such officers shall not engage in the private practice of law during the period they serve as elective officers of the City and County

C. Sheriff

CA Gov. Code §24004; SFC §6.105

The Sheriff shall keep the County jail; receive all prisoners committed to jail by competent authorities; execute the orders and legal processes issued by courts of the State of California; upon court order detail necessary bailiffs; and execute the orders and legal processes issued by the Board of Supervisors or by any legally authorized department or commission. No person is eligible to become a candidate for the office of sheriff in any county unless, at the time of the final filing date for election, he or she meets one of the following criteria:

1. An active or inactive advanced certificate issued by the Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training
2. One year of full-time, salaried law enforcement experience within the provisions of Section 830.1 or 830.2 of the Penal Code, at least a portion of which shall have been accomplished within five years prior to the date of filing, and possesses a Master's degree from an accredited college or university.
3. Two years of full-time, salaried law enforcement experience within the provisions of Section 830.1 or 830.2 of the Penal Code, at least a portion of which shall have been accomplished within five years prior to the date of filing, and possesses a Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university.
4. Three years of full-time, salaried law enforcement experience within the provisions of Section 830.1 or 830.2 of the Penal Code, at least a portion of which shall have been accomplished within five years prior to the date of filing, and possesses an Associate of Arts or Associate of Science degree,

or the equivalent, from an accredited college.

5. Four years of full-time, salaried law enforcement experience within the provisions of Section 830.1 or 830.2 of the Penal Code, at least a portion of which shall have been accomplished within five years prior to the date of filing, and possesses a high school diploma or the equivalent.

D. Treasurer

CA Gov. Code §27000.7; SFC §6.106

The Treasurer shall be responsible for the collection of taxes, the receipt of all monies collected by the City and County and their safeguard, deposit and investment in accordance with sound financial practices, and shall be responsible for collection of delinquent revenue. No person shall be eligible for election or appointment to the office of county treasurer, county tax collector, or county treasurer-tax collector of any county unless that person meets at least one of the following criteria:

1. The person has served in a senior financial management position in a county, city, or other public agency dealing with similar financial responsibilities for a continuous period of not less than three years, including, but not limited to, treasurer, tax collector, auditor, auditor-controller, or the chief deputy or an assistant in those offices.
2. The person possesses a valid Baccalaureate, Masters, or Doctoral degree from an accredited college or university in any of the following major fields of study: business administration, public administration, economics, finance, accounting, or a related field, with a minimum of 16 college semester units, or their equivalent, in accounting, auditing, or finance.
3. The person possesses a valid certificate issued by the California Board of Accountancy pursuant to Chapter 1 (commencing with Section 5000) of Division 3 of the Business and Professions Code, showing that person to be, and a permit authorizing that person to practice as, a certified public accountant.
4. The person possesses a valid charter issued by the Institute of Chartered Financial Analysts showing the person to be designated a Chartered Financial Analyst, with a minimum of 16 college semester units, or their equivalent, in accounting, auditing, or finance.
5. The person possesses a valid certificate issued by the Treasury Management Association showing the person to be designated a Certified Cash Manager, with a minimum of 16 college semester units, or their equivalent, in accounting, auditing, or finance.

E. Board of Education

CA Ed. Code §35107(b); SFC §8.100

The San Francisco Unified School District shall be under the control and management of a Board of Education composed of seven members who shall be elected by the voters of the Unified School District. No member of the Board of Education may serve on the Governing Board of the Community College District. An employee of the Unified School District may not be sworn into office as an elected or appointed member of the Board of Education unless and until he or she resigns as an employee. If the employee does not resign, the employment will automatically terminate upon being sworn into office. Members of the Board of Education are not subject to term limits.

F. Community College Board of Trustees

CA Ed. Code §72103(b); SFC §8.101

The Community College District shall be under the control and management of a Board of Trustees composed of seven members who shall be elected by the voters of the Community College District. No member of the Community College Board of Trustees is eligible to serve on the Board of Education. An employee of a Community College District may not be sworn into office as an elected or appointed member of that Community College District's governing board unless and until they resign as an employee.

If the employee does not resign, the employment will automatically terminate upon being sworn into office. This restriction does not apply to an individual who is usually employed in an occupation other than teaching and who is also employed part time by the Community College District to teach no more than one course per semester or quarter in the subject matter of the individual's occupation. Members of the Community College Board are not subject to term limits.

G. BART Board, Districts 7 and 9

CA PUC §28747.6

The BART Board of Directors is comprised of nine elected officials from the nine BART districts. No person is eligible to be elected to the BART Board of Directors unless that person is a resident of the BART district in which they are running and registered to vote in that district at the time nomination papers are issued.

V. Initial Filing Requirements

SFC&GCC §1.122, §4.101.1, SFMEC §201

Potential candidates must first file a Declaration of Intention to Solicit and Accept Contributions and a Declaration of Candidacy with the Department. This form is provided by the Department, and may be filed for one City elective office per election. If you are a member of a City board, commission, or other body established by the San Francisco Charter, filing your Declaration of Candidacy may, with certain exceptions, result in forfeiture of your seat. A candidate may authorize any representative to obtain and return documents on their behalf by completing a form provided by the Department.

A. Declaration of Candidacy

CAEC §8040

Each candidate must file a Declaration of Candidacy form which consists of several sections:

1. Declaration of filing under legal name
2. Sworn Statement
3. Oath of Office
4. If a candidate personally obtains and files the nomination documents, the Declaration of Candidacy must be executed in the presence of Department personnel. If a candidate authorizes another person to obtain and file the nomination documents, the candidate must execute the declaration, including the oath of office, in the presence of a notary public.

Candidates may be subject to other financial filing requirements before they obtain or file nomination documents. Candidates must contact the San Francisco Ethics Commission at [\(415\) 252-3100](tel:4152523100) or sfethics.org for further assistance regarding public financing, fundraising, or campaign finance requirements.

VI. Filing Fee Paid When Submitting Nomination Papers

CAEC §§8104(b), 8105-8106; SFMEC §§230, 810

A. Filing Fee

Candidates must pay a non-refundable filing fee when filing their nomination documents. The filing fee may be submitted by cashier's check, money order, credit card, certified or campaign (company) check, or cash. Checks should be made payable to the San Francisco Department of Elections. The filing fee for Mayor is subject to change based on each fiscal year.

B. Signatures-in-Lieu-of-Filing Fee

Prior to submitting nomination papers, candidates may circulate petitions-in-lieu-of-filing fees to reduce costs or remove filing fees. During this period, candidates can obtain Signatures-in-Lieu forms from the Department to circulate to offset the required filing fee. Each valid signer reduces the filing fee by \$0.50. In-Lieu Forms may be submitted to cover a portion of or the entire fee. The signers on In-Lieu Forms may also be used towards nomination requirements if the In-Lieu Forms are accompanied by a written request at the time of filing the In-Lieu Form.

From May 16, 2024 through July 10, 2024, candidates can obtain and file in-lieu petitions in order to pay for all or part of their filing fees by obtaining signatures of qualified voters. These signatures are due on or before the signatures-in-lieu deadline. Any portion of the filing fee not covered by the signatures must be paid in full when a candidate files their nomination documents. Please refer to the chart below to examine filing fees and the number of valid signatures necessary to reduce the filing fee to zero.

The Department is responsible for verifying signers. If a candidate submits between 101 and 2,000 signers, the Department will utilize a random sampling method to identify which signers to review. The sampling shall include 5% of signers if more than 2,000 are submitted. The percentage of valid signers contained within the sample will be applied and projected to the total amount submitted.

Filing Fee and Signature Equivalent			
Office	Filing Fee	Value of Each Signer	In-Lieu Signers
City Attorney	\$5,546 *	\$0.50	\$2,773
District Attorney	\$6,255 *	\$0.50	3,128
Sheriff	\$5,015 *	\$0.50	2,508
Treasurer	\$3,950 *	\$0.50	1,975
Board of Education	\$500	\$0.50	1,000
Community College Board	\$500	\$0.50	1,000
BART Board of Directors	\$0.00	N / A	N / A

** Filing fees based on FY2023 – 2024. Fees subject to change with new Fiscal Year*

C. Petition Circulator Information

CAEC §§104, 106, 2138, 2158

Candidates may circulate and sign their own in-lieu petitions.

The petition contains an Affidavit of Circulator. The circulator must complete each affidavit by hand, sign the affidavit, and return the petition to the candidate or to a person authorized by the candidate. The circulator may not complete a section of the affidavit and then duplicate the petition. When making a copy of a petition form, the candidate or circulator must ensure that no fields have been pre-filled.

For a voter's signature to be valid, the voter must indicate a residential address on the petition that matches the address in his or her registration record. A candidate or circulator may obtain voter registration cards from the Department to register and to provide to voters to update their residential addresses. Registration cards must be returned to the Department within three days of receipt from a voter.

Circulating a petition knowing it contains false, forged, or fictitious names is a misdemeanor.

D. Invalid Petition Signers

CAEC §§100, 100.5, 102, 105

The California Elections Code imposes strict rules governing the verification of petition signers. For example, a petition signer is invalid and cannot be counted if:

1. The signer does not provide a San Francisco residential address
2. The signer provides a different residential address from the address listed in their voter registration record
3. The signer provides a post office box, mail drop, or business address, rather than a residential address
4. The signer's address is pre-printed
5. The signer uses ditto marks for an address
6. The signature does not match the signature in the voter's registration record
7. The signature appears as a voter's mark but is not witnessed
8. The petition circulator fails to complete or sign the affidavit portion of the petition
9. The circulator is not 18 years of age or older

Each signer must personally place their own information on the petition and sign the form, unless unable to do so. If a signer is unable to personally affix on a petition his or her own information, the signer may request another person to print the signer's name and place of residence on the appropriate spaces of the petition, but the signer shall personally affix his or her mark or signature on the appropriate space of the petition. The mark or signature must be witnessed by another person. The witness must also sign the petition to indicate that the witness in fact witnessed the mark or signature.

VII. Nomination Period and Documents

SFMEC §§200, 205(b)

Nomination documents are used to establish whether a potential candidate has qualified to have his or her name appear on the ballot.

The Department furnishes all official nomination forms at our office; candidates may use only these forms. Candidates or their authorized representatives may pick up their nomination documents during the nomination period. The Department strongly encourages candidates to make an appointment with the Department and allow at least 30 minutes for the nomination documents to be issued.

All nomination documents must be returned together to the Department no later than the close of the nomination period.

A. Nomination Paper

CAEC §§100, 100.5, 104-106, 10220-10223; SFMEC §§240, 250

All candidates must submit a nomination paper with at least 20 and no more than 30 valid nomination signatures. The Department **strongly recommends** that candidates submit more than 20 signatures and submit their nomination paper prior to the deadline date. Any candidate with fewer than 20 valid nomination signatures at the nomination deadline will not be eligible for the ballot. For information about petition circulators and signatures, see Section VI. b. i-ii., above.

Any registered San Francisco voter may sign a nomination paper for any candidate for whom the voter is eligible to vote. No signer may sign more than one nomination paper for the same office, or, if there are several seats to be filled for the same office, more nomination papers than there are seats to be filled. If a voter signs more than one nomination paper, the signature shall be counted only on the first nomination paper filed with the Department.

Candidates may verify registration information on nomination papers prior to filing their nomination documents; public terminals are available for this purpose in the Department reception area. Nomination signatures are validated in the same way as signatures in lieu of the filing fee.

A nominator may withdraw his or her nomination of a candidate by (1) notifying the candidate at least 72 hours before the close of the nomination period and (2) filing a signed and sworn statement of withdrawal with the Department before the close of the nomination period, stating that the nominator provided the candidate with the required 72-hour notice.

B. Use of In-Lieu Petition Signatures as Nomination Signatures, Affidavit of Acceptance

CAEC §§8061, 10223

Each candidate who submits an in-lieu petition may request, in writing, that the Department count in-lieu signatures toward the number of signatures required for nomination. If the in-lieu petition contains at least 20 valid signatures, the candidate is not required to file a separate nomination paper. If the in-lieu petition contains fewer than 20 valid signatures, the candidate must circulate and file a nomination paper during the nomination period in order to obtain the necessary valid signatures. Candidates may use in-lieu petition forms for nomination purposes only as described here.

Any candidate who submits an in-lieu petition must also submit a separate Affidavit of the Nominee. This affidavit, which is included in the nomination paper, states that the nominee will accept the office in the event of election.

Note: Whether or not Signatures-in-Lieu of the filing fee will be applied toward the nomination signature requirement, they must be filed by the Signatures-in-Lieu deadline.

C. Legal Name, Name as It Should Appear on the Ballot

CAEC §§13104, 13106; SFMEC §210

A candidate must use their legal name on the Declaration of Candidacy; there is also a form to indicate how the candidate's name should be printed on the ballot. Legal names are those given at birth or established by marriage, general usage, habit, or by decree of any court of competent jurisdiction. A candidate's legal name or name to appear on the ballot may include a nickname, or combination of initials, full names, or individual letters or numerals.

No title or degree may appear on the same line as a candidate's name on a ballot.

D. Name in Chinese Characters / Transliteration

SFMEC §401

Each candidate's name will appear on the ballot in Chinese characters, as well as in English. Candidates may, but are not required to, submit a proposed translated or transliterated Chinese name. Please note that the Department uses traditional Chinese characters, rather than simplified. If a candidate does not submit a proposed Chinese name, the Department's translator will prepare a transliteration of the candidate's name.

The Director of Elections determines whether to accept a candidate's proposed Chinese name based on:

Any information submitted by the candidate regarding established use of the proposed name

Information regarding how the Chinese community refers to the candidate at community meetings or in the media

Whether or not a proposed translation or transliteration has another meaning in the Chinese language

Any other information the Director deems relevant in order to prevent voter confusion.

If a candidate has character-based name by birth, that can be verified by birth certificate or other valid identification, the candidate may use that name on the ballot instead of a phonetic transliteration. A candidate who does not have a character-based name by birth, but who identifies by a particular character-based name and can demonstrate that they have been known and identified within the public sphere by that name over the past two years, may use that name instead of a phonetic transliteration.

The Director of Elections' determination whether to accept a candidate's proposed Chinese name shall be final. The submitted or transliterated Chinese names of all candidates for local office are available for public review and possible legal challenge for 10 calendar days following the close of the Nomination Period.

E. Ballot Designation, Ballot Designation Worksheet

CAEC §§13107-13107.5; SFMEC §225

A candidate may request that his or her occupation appear below his or her name on the ballot; this is the candidate's ballot designation.

The nomination packet provided to all candidates includes a copy of the most recent ballot designation regulations issued by the California Secretary of State; these regulations may also be found at the California Secretary of State's website, sos.ca.gov/elections/upcoming-elections.

The Ballot Designation Worksheet is a required document that is designed to help support a candidate's proposed ballot designation or an alternate. Candidates should attach copies of any supporting documentation.

If a candidate does not want a designation to appear on the ballot under his or her name, the candidate must write the word "none" on the ballot designation section of the Declaration of Candidacy and sign the form. The word "none" will not appear on the ballot.

No candidate may change his or her designation after the deadline for filing nomination documents except as a result of a challenge or a writ of court.

With regard to a candidate’s ballot designation, if there is a discrepancy among the Affidavit of the Nominee, Declaration of Candidacy, and Ballot Designation Worksheet, the Department will use the information provided on the Declaration of Candidacy.

F. Acceptable Designations

CAEC §13107(a)

Each candidate may choose one of the following types of designation (or no designation):

Elective Office Title: The office title is the word or words designating the office (federal, state, county, city, district, or judicial) that the candidate holds at the time of filing nomination documents and to which the candidate was elected by a vote of the people (or was appointed, in the case of a Superior Court Judge). If the candidate is seeking election to a nonpartisan office, this title may not include political party affiliation. Examples: “City Attorney,” “Member, Board of Supervisors,” “Sheriff”

Incumbent: The word “incumbent” may be used if the candidate is running for the same office that the candidate holds at the time of filing nomination documents and to which the candidate was elected by a vote of the people (or was appointed, in the case of a Superior Court Judge).

Appointed Incumbent or Appointed and Office Title: If the candidate was appointed to an office and is filing as a candidate for election to the same office, the words “appointed incumbent” or the word “appointed” and the title of the office may be used. The appointed officeholder may not use the unmodified word “incumbent”

No More than Three Words Designating the Candidate’s Principal Professions, Vocations, or Occupations: The candidate may use up to three words to describe the principal profession, vocation, or occupation that they currently hold or held during the preceding year. California geographical names such as “City and County of San Francisco” are considered one word. Hyphenated words that appear in a standard English dictionary are also considered one word. Each part of all other hyphenated words are counted as a separate word.

If a candidate has more than one principal profession, vocation, or occupation, the candidate may use slashes to separate them. Dashes may be used only if required in the spelling.

Example: “Attorney / Accountant”

Basic Test of Acceptable Ballot Designation:	Answer:
Is it true?	Yes
Is it factually accurate?	Yes
Does it mislead?	No
Is it generic?	Yes
Is it neutral?	Yes
Is it how the candidate makes a living?	Yes

Examples of Acceptable Ballot Designations:

- Teacher
- Plumber
- Homemaker
- Retail Salesperson
- Computer Programmer
- Community Volunteer (as long as volunteer activities are the candidate’s principal occupation)

G. Unacceptable Designations

CAEC §13107(b)-(d); CCR §20716

Candidates may not use a designation that:

1. Would mislead the voter
2. Would suggest an evaluation of the candidate, such as “outstanding,” “leading,” “expert,” “virtuous,” or “eminent”
3. Abbreviates the word “retired.” A candidate may use “retired” in non-abbreviated form before the word it modifies as long as state law requirements for use of “retired” are met
4. Uses a word or prefix, such as “former” or “ex-,” which means a prior status; the only exception is the use of the word “retired”
5. Uses the name of any political party, whether or not it has qualified for the ballot
6. Uses a word or words referring to a racial, religious, or ethnic group
7. Refers to any activity prohibited by law

Examples of Unacceptable Ballot Designations

- Concerned Citizen
- Taxpayer
- Philanthropist
- Neighborhood Community Leader

If the Director of Elections finds that a proposed ballot designation violates any legal requirement, the Department will contact the candidate immediately. Within three business days of receiving this notification, the candidate must provide an alternative ballot designation. If the candidate fails to provide an alternative designation or affirm that a previously listed alternate is acceptable, the candidate’s name will appear on the ballot without any designation.

H. Candidate Qualification Statement (Optional)

CAEC §§13307, 13311, 18351; SFMEC §220

Candidates may, but are not required to, submit a statement of their qualifications for publication in the Voter Information Pamphlet. The Candidate Qualification Statement may include the name, age, and occupation of the candidate and a brief description of no more than 200 words of the candidate’s education and qualifications. The statement must be filed with the nomination documents by 5 p.m. on the last day of the nomination period. A candidate may withdraw, but not change, the Candidate Qualification Statement by filing a signed and sworn statement of withdrawal with the Department no later than 5 p.m. on the 67th day before the election.

There is a non-refundable \$750 statement fee for candidates for BART Board of Directors only.

The Department translates candidate qualification statements into Chinese, Spanish, and Filipino for the translated versions of the Voter Information Pamphlet.

Any candidate who knowingly makes a false statement of material fact in his or her candidate statement with the intent to mislead the voters in connection with his or her campaign for nomination or election may be punished by a fine of up to \$1,000.

I. Nominators and Letters of Endorsement or Support

SFMEC §§220(c), 250

If a candidate wishes to include in his or her Candidate Qualification Statement the names of nominators or supporters, the names and any identification will be counted toward the 200-word limit. If the candidate includes names of people who have not signed the candidate's nomination paper, the candidate must file a signed letter of endorsement or support from each individual whose name is included. The endorsement letter should include the name of the candidate, the elective office, the date of the election, and the supporter's signature.

A Candidate Qualification Statement that indicates that an organization or entity supports the candidate must be accompanied by a statement of confirmation signed by an officer or authorized representative of the organization or entity.

Supporters who are not nominators but who authorized use of their name in a Candidate Qualification Statement may withdraw this authorization by filing with the Department a signed and sworn statement of withdrawal at any time up until 5 p.m. on the last day of the nomination period. No endorser or supporter may withdraw authorization after this deadline.

J. Format

CAEC §13307

Candidate Qualification Statements should follow these guidelines:

The candidate's name at the top of the statement should match the name to be used on the ballot.

Type the statement exactly as it should appear, with clear spacing between paragraphs.

Do not include underlining, bold, or italicized type, all capital letters (except for acronyms), or unusual spacing; by law, the Department must print all statements in type of uniform size and darkness and with uniform spacing.

The Department strongly recommends that candidates not submit handwritten or hand-annotated statements. If the handwriting is illegible or any intended changes are unclear, the Department may need to interpret. In such cases, a statement may not be printed as the candidate intended.

Proofread the statement prior to submission. Statements are printed exactly as they are submitted. No corrections are permitted after submission, and the Department cannot correct spelling or grammatical errors.

K. Restrictions

CAEC §§13307, 13308

For nonpartisan offices, candidate statements must not include a candidate's party affiliation nor membership or activity in partisan political organizations. Statements also must not refer in any manner to other candidates for that office.

If a candidate refers to any subject other than his or her qualifications, the candidate could be subject to legal action.

L. Word Limit and Rules for Counting Words

CAEC §9; SFMEC §220(a)

The Candidate Qualification Statement may not exceed 200 words. The Department uses the following guidelines for counting words. The decision of the Director of Elections concerning word count is final. Candidates are encouraged to consult the Department regarding word count prior to submission.

Examples	Number of Words
Title of document, signature	n/a
Punctuation	n/a
Abbreviations or acronyms (SFSU, PTA, SFPD, U.S.M.C.)	1
Proper nouns, including geographical names (San Francisco, San Franciscans, California, Haight Ashbury)	1
Dates, whether numbers or a combination of words and numbers (6/7/2016, June 7, 2016)	1
Numbers consisting of one or more digits (1,000), percentages (12%), fractions (1/2)	1
Numbers that are spelled out (one hundred)	Varies; count each word
Characters used in place of a word or number (&, #)	1
Phone numbers or internet addresses	1

VIII. Public Examination and Challenges

CAEC §§13313-13314; SFMEC §590(a)

All nomination documents are available for public review during the 10-calendar-day period starting at noon the day after the nomination period ends. During this period, any voter of the jurisdiction in which the election is being held, or the Department, may challenge a candidate's legal name, qualification statement, ballot designation, or a translated or transliterated Chinese name requested by a candidate. Chinese transliterations of candidates' names that are provided by the Department's translator are also available for a 10-day examination period, which starts at noon on the 77th day before the election.

Any challenges must be submitted to the Department in writing during the 10-day public examination period. The challenge must demonstrate that the material is inconsistent with election law requirements and that action by the court to correct or remove the material will not substantially interfere with the conduct of the election.

Following the close of the public examination period for each category of material, the Department may proceed with publication of that material.

IX. Ranked-Choice Voting

SFC §13.102

Candidates for Mayor and Members of the Board of Supervisors are elected using ranked-choice voting. Voters passed ranked-choice voting as an amendment to the San Francisco City Charter in March 2002.

For more information about ranked-choice voting, visit sfelections.org

X. Statement of Economic Interests (FPPC Forms)

CA Gov. Code §87201, 87202

The Fair Political Practices Commission (FPPC) is the state body that promotes the integrity of state and local government through the enforcement of political campaign, lobbying, and conflict of interest laws. The FPPC provides a series of forms that campaigns and or candidates must complete and file with the San Francisco Department of Elections or the San Francisco Ethics Commission as a part of the nomination process. These forms are available for download from the FPPC website: fppc.ca.gov

1. **Form 501: Candidate Intention Statement** – *Contact the San Francisco Ethics Commission*
The Form 501 is required for candidates for state and local offices, it must be filed before candidates solicit or receive any contributions or make any personal expenditures on behalf of their candidacy.
2. **Form 700: Statement of Economic Interests**
File with the Department of Elections during Nomination Period
The Form 700 requires candidates for state and local offices to disclose any interests in real property and income during the 12 months preceding the election. The statement is not required for candidates who have filed a statement for the same jurisdiction within the 60 days prior to filing a Declaration of Candidacy.
3. **Form 410: Statement of Organization** – *Contact the San Francisco Ethics Commission*
The Form 410 must be filed if candidates or office holders use personal funds totaling over \$2,000 in a calendar year to seek or hold office. These funds are considered campaign contributions and will count towards qualifying as a recipient committee. This form must be filed within 10-days of receiving a \$2,000 or more contribution.

XI. Withdrawal of Candidacy

SFMEC §260

A candidate may withdraw his or her candidacy by filing a signed and sworn statement of withdrawal with the Department no later than 5 p.m. on the 67th day before the election.

XII. Write-In Candidacy Period

CAEC §§8600 - 8604

Any voter who wants to be a write-in candidate must obtain and file the following documents no later than 5 p.m. on the 14th day before the election:

- A. Nomination paper with the required number of nomination signatures
- B. Statement of Write-In Candidacy, including the oath of office
- C. Statement of Economic Interests (FPPC Form 700)
- D. Code of Fair Campaign Practices (optional)

Write-in candidates' names do not appear on the ballot. Filing fees, ballot designations, and candidate qualification statements are not applicable to write-in candidates. Campaign finance laws apply to all candidates, including write-in candidates.

XIII. Election Day Through Certification of Results

A. Election Day

CAEC §§319.5, 18370

The polls are open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Electioneering, which is any visible or audible activity that advocates for or against any candidate or measure on the ballot, is prohibited within 100 feet of the room in which voters are casting ballots.

Examples of prohibited materials and activities include displaying a candidate's name, likeness, or logo; buttons, hats, pencils, pens, shirts, signs, or stickers with information about candidates or issues on the ballot; or any audible broadcasting of information about candidates or measures on the ballot.

Electioneering also includes soliciting petition signatures within 100 feet of a polling place. Violations can be charged as misdemeanors.

B. Election Results Reports

CAEC §15372(a)

On Election Night, the Department will release the first preliminary summary report of election results at approximately 8:45 p.m. This report will provide the results from the vote-by-mail ballots processed before Election Day.

Approximately hourly after that, the Department will release additional summary results reports that include votes cast at the polling places.

After all polling places have reported, the Department will release a final summary report.

The Department will release updated results reports at approximately 4 p.m. on every day on which it counts ballots. On any days during which no ballots are counted, the Department will post a notice on sfelections.org stating that no update will be issued.

The Department will release final election results at the end of the official canvass period, no later than 30 days after the election.

If no candidate receives a majority of votes for a nonpartisan office, the candidates with the two highest vote totals will appear on the ballot for the general election.

For more information about results reporting, visit sfelections.org