

MAKE
CHANGE!

BE
HEARD

WOTE!

2026 CANDIDATE SEMINAR

March 26, 2026



WHAT THIS SEMINAR IS (and isn't)

- ➔ **Overview of election requirements**
- ➔ **Key deadlines and responsibilities**
- ➔ **Common mistakes to avoid**
- ✗ **NOT legal advice**
- ✗ **NOT campaigning advice**



YOUR CANDIDATE JOURNEY

File to become a candidate

File financial reports

Close campaign properly

Open a campaign account

Raise funds or collect petitions

Qualify



FILE YOUR INITIAL FORMS

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Pages
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You are not a candidate
until these are filed:



- **DS-DE 9** - Appointment of Campaign Treasurer and Designation of Campaign Depository for Candidates
- **DS-DE 84** - Statement of Candidate
- **DS-DE 83** - Statement of Candidate for Judicial Office (*Judicial Candidates only*)
- **Special District Exception**
Special District Candidates who WILL NOT incur election expenses or contributions are not required to file form DS-DE 9. An Affidavit of Intent is filed instead. The form is obtained from the SOE Office.

The image shows three overlapping forms. The top form is DS-DE 9, titled 'APPOINTMENT OF CAMPAIGN TREASURER AND DESIGNATION OF CAMPAIGN DEPOSITORY FOR CANDIDATES'. The middle form is DS-DE 84, titled 'STATEMENT OF CANDIDATE'. The bottom form is DS-DE 83, titled 'STATEMENT OF CANDIDATE FOR JUDICIAL OFFICE'. Each form has an 'OFFICE USE ONLY' section. The DS-DE 84 form has an 'X' marked in the signature area. The DS-DE 83 form has a signature and date line. A blue arrow points from the text above to the forms.



APPOINT A TREASURER

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- **Required before raising or spending money**
- **Can be yourself**
- **Responsible for all reporting**
- **Must sign original form**



OPEN A CAMPAIGN BANK ACCOUNT

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- **Separate account required**
- **No mixing personal funds**
- **All spending from campaign account**
- **Only treasurer/deputy signs checks**



THE PETITION OPTION

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- **File DS-DE 9 first** (*most candidates*)
- **Collect signatures from voters in your district**
- **Turn in early... don't wait!**
 - *Judicial Candidates: Noon, March 23, 2026*
 - *Other Local County Candidates: Noon, May 11, 2026*
- **\$0.10 verification fee per petition**



WHAT IS

QUALIFYING?

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- **One-week official filing period**
- **What is Pre-Qualifying?**
- **Required to appear on the ballot**
- **Submit required documents**
- **Pay fee *OR* qualify by petition**



QUALIFYING REQUIREMENTS

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- 1 **Candidate Oath**
- 2 **Financial Disclosure (Form 6 or 1)**
- 3 **Qualifying Fee** (*campaign check only*)
OR Certified Petitions



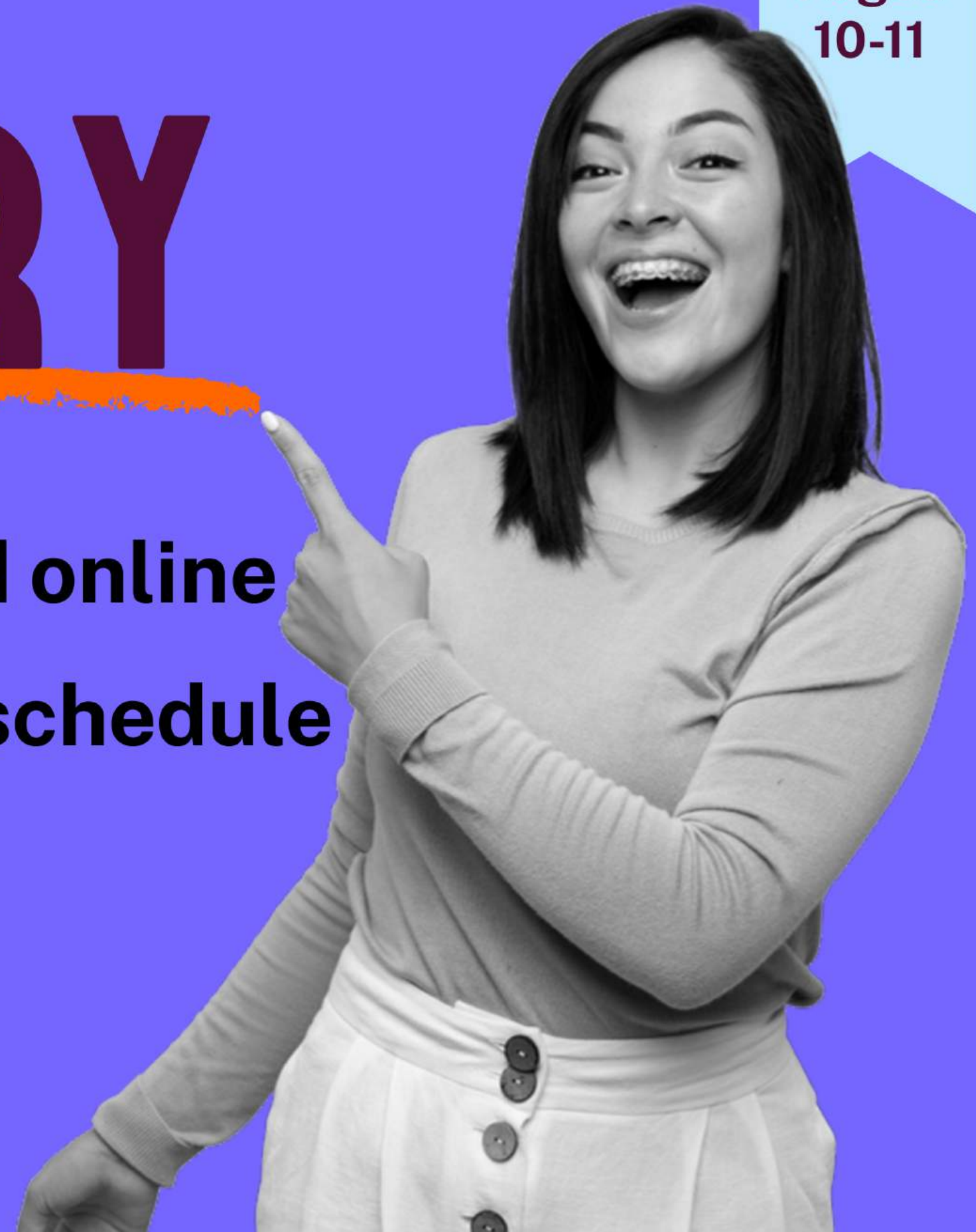
CAMPAIGN FINANCE



REPORTING IS MANDATORY

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- Reports must be completed online
- Reports should be filed on schedule ***EVEN IF*** there's no activity.
- Deadlines **matter**



TYPES OF CONTRIBUTIONS



Check



Cash



Debit/Credit

Third-party processors require careful reporting.

CONTRIBUTION LIMITS

- **\$1,000 per person/business per election**
- **Cash limit = \$50**
- **Over \$100 requires occupation**
- **No contributions within 5 days of election**
- **Your own money = unlimited**
- **Limits reset if candidate moves onto the General Election**



FUNDRAISERS

- Cannot hold until you file as a candidate
- All proceeds count as contributions
- ✗ Raffles are NOT allowed
- Invitations must include a disclaimer
- Fundraising expenses must be reported, including in-kind contributions



LATE REPORTS

= FINES

- **\$50/day initially**
- **Up to \$500/day before elections**
- **Paid from personal funds**
- **You can file amendments**
- **NO EXTENSIONS**



COMMON FINANCE MISTAKES

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- ✗ Raising money before filing DS-DE 9
- ✗ Accepting late contributions
- ✗ Incomplete reporting

- ✗ Misspending campaign dollars
- ✗ Missing deadlines





CAMPAIGN ADVERTISING



WHAT IS POLITICAL ADVERTISING?



- ➔ **Paid message supporting or opposing a candidate**
- ➔ **Includes mailers, digital, text messages, & more**
- ➔ **Requires proper disclaimer**



MAKE
CHANGE

DISCLAIMER BASICS

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- **Must follow statute exactly**
- **Language depends on office and party**
- **Some items do not require disclaimer**

When unsure... **ask first!**



DO'S AND DON'TS

- ➔ **Non-incumbents must use “for”**
- ➔ **Cannot use “re-elect” if not an incumbent**
- ➔ **Mailers should show correct ballot marking**
- ➔ **Signs must follow local rules**

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**SOE VOTER DATA
AVAILABLE
TO**

CANDIDATES



ACCESSING VOTER DATA

AVAILABLE BY REQUEST:

- Call the Supervisor of Elections Office
- Submit a public records request

Unsure what to request?

We can help!



VOTE-BY-MAIL INFORMATION

- **Candidates can access ballot request data**
- **Complete data request form**
- **Updated daily**





CLOSING YOUR

**CAMPAIGN
ACCOUNT**



WHEN THE

CAMPAIGN ENDS

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**Must close properly
within 90 DAYS if you:**

- Withdraw**
- Lose**
- Win**
- *OR* become unopposed**



DISPOSING OF FUNDS

- **Return to donors** (*pro rata*)
- **Donate to charity**
- **Transfer limited amount to party**
- **Transfer to office account** (*if elected*)
- **File termination report**



OTHER LAWS

TO KNOW

- **Resign-to-run**
- **Changing party affiliation**
- **Changing treasurer**
- **False reporting penalties**



RESOURCES

- **Candidate and Campaign Treasurer Handbook**
- **Finance Reporting Manual**
- **OCSOE Website Resources**
- **Florida Division of Election Website Resources**
- **Important Dates**

Candidate Seminar #2



WE'RE HERE TO

HELP YOU!



QUESTIONS?

WE'RE HERE TO ANSWER THEM!



CONTACT US

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FOLLOW US

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ARE YOU READY?

BOOK AN APPOINTMENT TODAY!



JUDGES

Book a Qualifying
Appointment in April



COUNTY CANDIDATES

Book a Qualifying
Appointment in June

