Department of the Secretary of State

Bureau of Corporations, Elections and Commissions



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*Secretary of State*

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**Memorandum**

# To: Municipal Registrars and Clerks

From: Melissa K. Packard, Director of Elections

Re: Qualifying Political Parties

Date: May 3, 2021

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide information on parties that currently are in qualifying status in Maine. In Maine, those seeking to start new parties, or to re-qualify a party that has been disqualified, submit a *Declaration of Intent to Form a Party by Party Enrollment* with this office (the most recent deadline was December 30, 2020), which must be signed by 10 or more voters who are not enrolled in a qualified party. The following table provides information for each of the current qualifying parties:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Party Name | Declaration Filed | Declaration Approved | Deadline to Enroll Voters |
| Alliance | 12/30/2020 | 1/7/2021 | 1/2/2022 |
| Libertarian \* | 12/7/2020 | 12/11/2020 | 1/2/2022 |
| People’s | 12/1/2020 | 12/11/2020 | 1/2/2022 |
| Yankee | 12/30/2020 | 1/7/2021 | 1/2/2022 |

\* NOTE: The Libertarian Party previously filed a Declaration to form a Party in 2018, but as they failed to enroll enough voters, the Libertarian Party was disqualified in 2019, and filed a new Declaration in December 2020, to try to qualify again.

In order for any of these parties to become a qualified party for the 2022 elections, the groups must enroll at least 5,000 voters in the proposed party by January 2, 2022. A voter may enroll in one of these qualifying parties by completing a new Maine Voter Registration Application. The voter must check the box next to “Other qualifying party:” and write in the name of the qualifying party. Qualifying parties will not be printed on the Maine Voter Registration Application until they become qualified parties.

If the voter misspells the name of a party, but it is clear that the voter’s intent is to enroll in the qualifying party, you must enroll the voter in the appropriate party. If in doubt, contact the Division of Elections for guidance.

Please refer to Chapter 4 of your Central Voter Registration (CVR) User Guide (pages 8 and 52) for instructions on how to process the enrollments as an “other qualifying party” in CVR.

NOTE: The date of registration (if new voter) or date of change (for voters changing enrollment) is the date the application is filed with the municipality. Even if you don’t immediately process the change in CVR, make sure you date stamp each application with the date it was received, and use this date when you process the application in CVR. If the application was received prior to the date of approval, do not enroll the voter in the qualifying party, as the parties were not in qualifying status prior to the date in the “Declaration Approved” column of the above table.

Important Enrollment Reminders

All statutes and rules relating to changing and withdrawing enrollment apply to voters enrolling in the qualifying parties.

* Once a voter enrolls in a party (including a qualifying party), the voter must remain in that party for 3 monthsbefore the voter can file an application to either withdraw or change enrollment.
* A voter who is enrolled in a qualified party (Democratic, Green Independent or Republican) currently must have been in that party for at least 3 months before filing an application to change enrollment to one of the qualifying parties (or one of the qualified parties).
* Upon receiving an application to change enrollment, the Registrar must update CVR to designate the change. CVR automatically removes the designation from the party enrollment field and replaces it with an “X”. The “X” represents the 15-day waiting period and denotes that the voter does not yet belong to the new party. While in the 15-day “X” period, the voter is ineligible to vote in a primary, caucus or party convention.
1. To change an existing voter’s enrollment in
CVR, look up the voter through Inquiries and select Change. Enter date of change (date request received) and select “Other Qualifying Party” from the Party drop down.)
2. Select the qualifying party from the Other Qualifying Party drop down. The Party Enrollment Date will be the same as the date
of the change for existing voters. For new
voters, it will be the Registration Date.

1. For voters changing parties, the effective Enrollment Date will be 15 days later. Until that time, the voter’s enrollment status is “X”, as shown below (and as would be shown on a voter list):



15 days after the party change is entered into CVR, the system automatically removes the “X” and replaces it with the new party designation (“D”, “G”, “R” or “AL” for Alliance, “L” for Libertarian, “PE” for People’s or “Y” for Yankee).

Important Voter Registration Reminders:

1. Rejected Applications

Please remember that applications from qualified voters (i.e., those who are US Citizens, 18 years old, and a resident of the municipality) may be rejected only when the required information on the application is missing or illegible. When you reject an application because required information is missing or illegible, you DO NOT enter the application in CVR or generate a Voter Registration Acknowledgment Notice (VRAN) through CVR – just send a VRAN independent of CVR.

* Forexisting voters currently registered in your municipality, who areenrolling in one of the qualifying parties or changing from a qualified party (Democratic, Green Independent or Republican) to one of the qualifying parties, the application need only include the basic information required of all voters: the voter’s name, complete date of birth, complete residence address that is valid for your municipality, and the voter’s signature. No additional information is required.

* For new voters(not currently registered in Maine), the application must include the same basic information required of all voters plus: (A) U.S. citizen question must be checked “Yes”; and (B) prior registration question must be checked either “Yes” or “No” and if “Yes” is checked, then the prior address information must be completed.
* For existing voters changing municipality(currently registered in another municipality in Maine), the application must include the same basic information required of all voters plus: the prior registration question must be checked either “Yes” or “No” and if “Yes” is checked, then the prior address information must be completed.

Note:You may not reject applications for insufficient proof of identity or residency. You must register the voter and indicate no proof was provided. The voter will have to provide proof of identity and/or residency the first time they vote, or vote a challenged ballot.

1. Voter Notification of Rejected Application

You must notify the voter in writing if you reject the application because the required information is missing or illegible, and provide the voter with a new application to complete. Please keep the rejected applications along with a copy of the voter’s notification of rejection in alphabetical order in a separate file in your office. We may request that municipalities provide a copy or a list of the rejected applications to this office, so that we can inform the appropriate qualifying party.

Status of Qualification

If any of the qualifying parties fails to qualify to participate in a Primary Election in 2022, the Secretary of State will notify municipal election officials of that fact and remove the enrollment for each voter who is enrolled in the affected qualifying party by a batch process. This batch process will change each voter’s enrollment status to Unenrolled (“U”).

When a party is attempting to qualify by enrollment, it is imperative that all requests for enrollment in the qualifying party are handled appropriately. Please take extra precautions to ensure that voter registration applications and enrollment entry in CVR are processed correctly.

If you have any questions about how to process requests for enrollment in the qualifying party, or whether specific applications are valid, please contact the Division of Elections (1-888-VOTESME or 624-7650) or the CVR Helpdesk (1-877-HAVAHLP).