# YOUR GUIDE TO RUNNING FOR ELECTED OFFICE

## CITY OF WESTMINSTER, CA

Provided by the City Clerk Department

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# Introduction

Congratulations on taking the first step to becoming a candidate for the Westminster City Council! Public service is a noble and worthwhile cause and your interest is valued and appreciated.

Running for City Council is a process with many components, including regulations, deadlines, and paperwork. While the process may seem overwhelming, this guide takes you through the steps to becoming a candidate and what to expect during your candidacy.

## 2016 Municipal Election

**The next municipal election will be held November 8, 2016 to fill three seats on the City Council:**

- One mayoral seat (two-year term)
- Two council member seats (four-year term)

## Candidate Eligibility

Any member of the public who meets the requirements below may run for public office in the City of Westminster. You must:

- Be at least eighteen years of age.
- Be a citizen of the United States and a resident of California.
- Be a registered voter and a resident within the city the candidate seeks to represent for not less than 30 days preceding the date of filing candidate papers. Registration will be verified before issuance of nomination papers.

# Getting Started

## Legal Disclaimer

This guide is intended to provide general information and does not have the force and effect of law, regulation or rule. It is distributed with the understanding that the City of Westminster is not rendering legal advice. We strongly recommend that any prospective candidate obtain legal advice to assist in complying with applicable California laws, including the California Elections Code and California Government Code.

## Fair Political Practices Commission (FPPC)

The FPPC is a non-partisan commission primarily responsible for administering the Political Reform Act, which regulates campaign financing, conflicts of interest, lobbying, and governmental ethics. Its mission is "to promote the integrity of state and local government in Cailfornia through fair, impartial interpretation and enforcement of political campaign, lobbying and conflict of interest laws." The FPPC forms referenced throughout this guide are available at www.fppc.ca.gov.

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**Before you continue, read the FPPC Campaign Disclosure Manual 2:** Information for Local Candidates, Their Controlled Committees, and Primarily Formed Committees for Local Candidates.

This manual provides information on campaign disclosure rules as required under the Political Reform Act, as well as directions for filling out the FPPC forms referenced throughout this guide. If you have any questions, contact the FPPC directly at **1 (800) 275-3772**.



## FPPC Form 501: Candidate Intention Statement

If you plan on receiving contributions or spending funds, including your own funds, you must file **FPPC Form 501: Candidate Intention Statement** with the City Clerk **before** receiving or spending funds.

## FPPC Requirements for Campaign Funding

Managing campaign funds is an important undertaking for any candidate. Here are a few tips below to help you get started with campaign fund accountability and establishing your new campaign committee:

- **Keep a record of expenditures and contributions** of $25 or more. Your records should include the date, amount (of each transaction and total cumulative), name and address of contributor or payee, contributor's occupation and employer (for contributions of $100 or more), and description.

- Never accept or spend $100 or more **in cash**.
- **Open a bank account** if you plan to receive contributions from others or you plan to expend personal funds totaling $1,000 or more. All money used for campaign purposes, including money from the candidate's personal funds, must be deposited in the campaign bank account **prior** to the expenditure. The only exception is the filing fee and candidate statement deposit.
- **File FPPC Form 410: Statement of Organization and a $50 filing fee** with the Secretary of State within 10 days of receiving $1,000 in contributions. Submit a copy of the filed form with the City Clerk. **NOTE:** If you have an active campaign committee from a previous election, contact the FPPC for assistance on filing an amendment.

# Nomination Period

The nomination period is when prospective candidates "pull" and file their paperwork to officially run for City Council. **The 2016 election nomination period is July 18 through 5:00 p.m. on August 12, 2016.** Below is an overview of what takes place during the nomination period:

## Step 1: "Pulling" Papers

The City Clerk will issue your Nomination Paper and Candidate Packet during the nomination period. You must be a registered voter at the time the Nomination Paper is issued and will be required to sign a proof of receipt when receiving the Nomination Paper. This process takes approximately 30 minutes, so it is recommended that you schedule an appointment with the City Clerk.

## Step 2: Gathering Signatures

You will need no less than 20 nor more than 30 registered voters residing in Westminster, CA to sign your Nomination Paper. Each signer must **sign** his/her name, **print** his/her name, and **print** his/her address; failure to complete will result in a signature that is not counted. Only one person can circulate the Nomination Paper. You may circulate your own. The circulator must complete the Declaration of Circulator. Leave the Affidavit of Nominee blank; this will be completed at the time you file your Nomination Paper with the City Clerk.

## Step 3: Preparing Papers for Filing

**REQUIRED:** Ballot Designation Worksheet – This is your name and occupation as it will appear on the official ballot. Your occupation must be your principal profession, vocation or occupation, and may not be more than three words. You may use the full title of the elective office you currently hold. **(Step 3 continued on page 5)**



## Step 3: Preparing Papers for Filing (cont.)

**REQUIRED:** FPPC Form 700: Statement of Economic Interests – Your statement should cover the 12-month period prior to filing your Nomination Paper.

**OPTIONAL:** Candidate's Statement – This is a 200-word statement that will be printed in the sample ballot and mailed to the voters. Cost of the statement varies per election and is paid by the candidate in advance.

**OPTIONAL:** Subscription to Code of Fair Campaign Practices

**OPTIONAL:** Public Information Paper – This is your background information, which will be given to the public and press.

## Step 4: Filing Papers

Your Nomination Paper and all required and optional documents must be completed and submitted to the Election Official/City Clerk **before 5:00 p.m. on August 12, 2016**.

# What's Next?

## Campaign/Financial Reporting Filing Deadlines

If you raise or spend money in connection with your campaign, you will be required to file campaign statements throughout the election period leading up to Election Day. There are specific deadlines and forms you must file based on your spending or receiving amount per calendar year. Filing deadlines may be obtained at www.fppc.ca.gov by clicking on "Candidates and Committees," then "Filing Deadlines."

## Campaigning

If you plan on campaigning, refer to your Candidate Packet for rules and laws to ensure you are in compliance.

## Election Day: November 8, 2016

Congratulations on your efforts – you've made it to Election Day!

## Final Tips to Remember

- When in doubt, contact the FPPC directly or refer to FPPC Manual 2.
- Refer to your Candidate Packet as it will include regulations for:
  - Political Signs
  - Registered Voter and Vote-by-Mail Ballot Information
  - Literature Requirements and Mass Mailings
  - Use of Surplus Campaign Funds
- Be sure to keep originals of canceled checks, vouchers and invoices, and photocopies of checks. Also, keep dates and daily totals of all expenditures and contributions. Records must be kept for four years after the election.
- A candidate's forum is typically held in October and is a televised opportunity for you to make comments and answer questions.

## Your Election Official/City Clerk

**City Clerk Amanda Jensen, CMC**

**Email:** ajensen@westminster-ca.gov

**Department Main Line:** (714) 548-3237

Available by appointment, Monday-Thursday, 7:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m., and Friday, 7:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Closed alternate Fridays. Click here for calendar.

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