

The background of the top half of the page features a large, light gray watermark of the Seal of the State of South Dakota. The seal is circular with a serrated outer edge. Inside the circle, the words "STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA" are written in a semi-circle at the top, and "GREAT SEAL" is at the bottom. The year "1889" is at the very bottom. The center of the seal depicts a landscape with a river, a bridge, and a sun rising over hills.

How To Circulate A Nominating Petition 2026

Statewide, Legislative & County Candidates

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Monae L. Johnson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Monae" being the most prominent part.

Monae L. Johnson

South Dakota Secretary of State

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CIRCULATING A NOMINATING PETITION

1. The declaration of candidacy at the top of the petition form must be completed prior to circulation for signatures (SDCL [12-6-8](#)). **The declaration of candidacy cannot be signed prior to January 1, 2026. The CANDIDATE MAY NOT SERVE AS THE NOTARY PUBLIC** (SDCL [12-6-8](#)).
2. Petitions may not be circulated before January 1, 2026. Party nominating petitions may be filed no earlier than January 1 and no later than 5:00 p.m. local time on March 31, 2026. Nominating petitions for independent candidates may be filed no earlier than January 1 and no later than 5:00 p.m. local time on April 28, 2026. Petitions which are mailed by **REGISTERED MAIL** prior to 5:00 p.m. on the last day to file will be considered timely filed. Certified mail received after the deadline will **NOT** be considered timely filed (SDCL [12-6-4](#); [12-7-1](#)). It is prudent to submit any petition to the filing authority **with ample time prior to the deadline to allow you to collect additional signatures** if there are not sufficient valid signatures presented on your initial petition. If a candidate has been defeated in a Primary Election for **office in the Legislature**, the candidate may not run for that office under the affiliation of a different political party in the same election year as the Primary Election (SDCL [12-6-65](#)).
3. The **NOTARY PUBLIC MAY NOT** be a **SIGNER** if they **NOTARIZE** the circulator's verification (SDCL [18-1-12.2](#)).
4. Signatures of registered voters must be obtained on or between the date of the candidate's signed declaration of candidacy and the date of the circulator's verification.
5. A **petition circulator** must be a resident of the state of South Dakota who is at least eighteen years of age. They are not required to be a registered voter.
6. No registered sex offender may circulate a petition except when circulating a nominating petition on his or her own behalf or if they are in the employ of, and under the immediate supervision of, another person and where circumstances preclude any contact with children (SDCL [12-1-32](#); [12-1-33](#); [12-1-34](#)).
7. The petition circulator must personally witness each signature on the petition being circulated. The petition's verification must be completed following circulation and must include the circulator's printed name, address (refer to #11 below), city, state and be signed under oath before a South Dakota notary public or other officer authorized to administer oaths (SDCL [18-3-1](#)). **THE NOTARY PUBLIC THAT NOTARIZES THE CIRCULATOR'S VERIFICATION MAY NOT BE THE CIRCULATOR** (SDCL [18-1-12.2](#)).
8. Each petition signer must be a registered voter, active or inactive, in the state of South Dakota in the jurisdiction for which the petition is circulated (SDCL [12-4-34](#); [12-6-8](#)).
9. All petition signers for political party candidates must be registered voters of that party (SDCL [12-5-1.4](#)). Independent candidates may collect signatures from any registered voter.
10. Signers must sign their names as they are registered to vote or as they usually sign their names. The signer's legibly printed name must also appear.
11. Each signature line must show the signer's complete voter registration address. This can be a street and house number or rural route and box number (only if a resident of a second- or third-class municipality, which are those with less than 5,000 residents) in addition to the city or town. Zip codes are optional. A signer in a first-class municipality may not use a PO Box. This would include the following municipalities: *Aberdeen, Belle Fourche, Box Elder, Brandon, Brookings, Harrisburg, Huron, Madison, Mitchell, Pierre, Rapid City, Sioux Falls, Spearfish, Sturgis, Tea, Vermillion, Watertown and Yankton*.
12. Each signature line must show the month and day it was signed. Numbers to designate the month are permissible. Abbreviations commonly used are also acceptable.
13. The county of the signer's voter registration must be included.
14. The date, voter registration address, county of registration, and printed name may be added by the circulator prior to the petition being submitted. Ditto marks may not be used.
15. A voter may sign as many petitions for a particular office as there are positions to be filled (SDCL [12-6-8](#)).
16. A person may not conduct petition signature gathering within 100 feet of a polling place (SDCL [12-18-3](#)).
17. If photocopies are made of an original signed petition sheet for circulation, at least one original petition sheet must be submitted with the photocopied sheets.
18. Each petition sheet must be a self-contained sheet with the heading, declaration of candidacy, instructions to signers, signature lines and circulator's verification on a single sheet printed front and back side.
19. The **NOTARY PUBLIC** must be a **SOUTH DAKOTA NOTARY PUBLIC**. **Notary Public Reminder:** Make sure your notary signs, lists the complete date of signing and commission expiration date (Month/Day/Year), and affixes their seal.

Offices to be Filled in the 2026 Primary and General Elections			
Partisan and Independent Candidates			
Office	Term	Signature Requirement	Deadline
U.S. Senator*	6 Years	Democratic - 1,232 Independent - 3,502 Republican - 2,171 Libertarian - 741 Newly Recognized Political Party - 250	File petitions with the Secretary of State by March 31, 2026 at 5:00 p.m. central time or mail by Registered Mail by this date and time. Independent candidates have until April 28, 2026 at 5:00 p.m. central time to file or mail by Registered Mail by this date and time.
U.S. Representative*	2 Years		
Governor*	4 Years		
Legislators*	2 Years	Signature requirements vary per legislative district. See separate chart.	File petitions with the County Auditor by March 31, 2026 at 5:00 p.m. local time or mail by Registered Mail by this date and time. Independent candidates have until April 28, 2026 at 5:00 p.m. local time to file or mail by Registered Mail by this date and time.
County Commissioner*	4 Years	Signature requirements vary per county. See separate chart or contact your county auditor.	
County Auditor*	4 Years		
County Sheriff*	4 Years		
County Register of Deeds*	4 Years		
The following nominations are made in the Primary Election.			
Water Development District Director	4 Years	25 Signatures	File petitions with the Secretary of State by March 31, 2026 at 5:00 p.m. central time or mail by Registered Mail by this date and time.
Heartland Consumer Power Directors	6 Years	50 Signatures	File petitions with the Secretary of State by March 31, 2026 at 5:00 p.m. central time or mail by Registered Mail by this date and time.
The following nominations are made in the General Election.			
Conservation District Supervisor	4 Years	15 Signatures	File petitions by July 1, 2026 at 5:00 p.m. local time with the County Auditor if the District covers one county. If the District covers multiple counties, then file the petition with the Secretary of State.
Retention Election - South Dakota Supreme Court Justice	8 Years	File a request, by August 4, 2026 , with the Secretary of State to be placed on the retention ballot	
The following will be nominated at the 2026 state conventions of each political party.			
Public Utilities Commissioner	6 Years	Independent - 3,502	Recognized political party candidates are nominated at convention. Independent candidates file with the Secretary of State by April 28, 2026 at 5:00 p.m. central time or mail by Registered Mail by this date and time.
Attorney General	4 Years		
Secretary of State	4 Years		
State Auditor	4 Years		
State Treasurer	4 Years		
Commissioner of School and Public Lands	4 Years		
The following nominations are made in the Primary Election.			
Delegates to State Party Conventions	2 Years	Only if designated to be elected at a Primary Election in the party’s bylaws SDCL 12-5-3.11. Contact your party for this information.	
Precinct Committeeman and Committeewoman	2 Years		
See Pages 3 and 4 for information for Newly Recognized Political Party and Alternative Political Party Status Candidates.			
*Only voters registered within your same political party may sign your petition.			
*Independent candidates may collect from any registered voter.			

Alternative Political Status Candidates			
Office	Term	Signature Requirement	Deadline
U.S. Senator*	6 Years	250 Signatures A candidate with Alternative Political Party Status may choose if allowed by the party bylaws to participate in the Primary Election by submitting a candidate petition no later than March 31, 2026 at 5:00 p.m. central time or mailing the petition by Registered Mail by that date and time.	A party with Alternative Political Status may nominate a candidate for US Senate, US House of Representatives, Governor, and any legislative seat by convention, if the nomination is submitted with the proper documentation to the Office of the Secretary of State by August 11, 2026 at 5:00 p.m. central time . If the candidate wants to submit petitions, they must be submitted to the Secretary of State's Office by March 31, 2026 at 5:00 pm central time or mailed by Registered Mail by that date and time.
U.S. Representative*	2 Years		
Governor*	4 Years		
Legislators*	2 Years	Signature requirements vary per legislative district. See separate chart.	
County Commissioner*	4 Years	Signature requirements vary per county. See separate chart or contact your county auditor.	A party with Alternative Political status cannot nominate county candidates at their party convention. They must file petitions with the County Auditor by March 31, 2026 at 5:00 p.m. local time or mailed by Registered Mail by this date and time.
County Auditor*	4 Years		
County Sheriff*	4 Years		
County Register of Deeds*	4 Years		
The following will be nominated at the 2026 state conventions of each political party.			
Public Utilities Commissioner	6 Years		A party with Alternative Political Status may nominate candidates at their state convention. The Party will certify is nominees to Secretary of State's Office by August 11, 2026 at 5:00 p.m. central time .
Attorney General	4 Years		
Secretary of State	4 Years		
State Auditor	4 Years		
State Treasurer	4 Years		
Commissioner of School and Public Lands	4 Years		
The following nominations are made in the Primary Election.			
Delegates to State Party Conventions	2 Years	Only if designated to be elected at a Primary Election in the party’s bylaws SDCL 12-5-3.11. Contact your party for this information.	
Precinct Committeeman and Committeewoman	2 Years		

Newly Recognized Political Party Candidates			
Office	Term	Signature Requirement	Deadline
U.S. Senator*	6 Years	250 Signatures	A new political party may nominate a candidate for US Senate, US House of Representatives, Governor, and any legislative seat by convention, if the nomination is submitted to the Office of the Secretary of State by August 11, 2026 at 5:00 p.m. central time.
U.S. Representative*	2 Years		
Governor*	4 Years		
Legislators*	2 Years	5 Signatures	
County Commissioner*	4 Years	5 Signatures	New Political Party county candidates cannot be nominated at party convention. File petitions with the County Auditor by March 31, 2026 at 5:00 p.m. local time or mail by Registered Mail by this date and time.
County Auditor*	4 Years		
County Sheriff*	4 Years		
County Register of Deeds*	4 Years		
The following will be nominated at the 2026 state conventions of each political party.			
Public Utilities Commissioner	6 Years		Recognized new political party candidates are nominated at their state convention.
Attorney General	4 Years		
Secretary of State	4 Years		
State Auditor	4 Years		
State Treasurer	4 Years		
Commissioner of School and Public Lands	4 Years		
The following nominations are made in the Primary Election.			
Delegates to State Party Conventions	2 Years	Only if designated to be elected at a Primary Election in the party’s bylaws SDCL 12-5-3.11. Contact your party for this information.	
Precinct Committeeman and Committeewoman	2 Years		