

Qualifying Officer FAQs

Prepared and presented by the Education & Information Division of the Georgia Government Transparency & Campaign Finance Commission

Question: Are the local election superintendents still considered Filing Officers?

Response: The Commission is the only Filing Officer within the State of Georgia. There are no campaign finance related forms or reports that are filed at the local level anymore.....not even copies. The revised law became effective 01/10/2011.

Question: Who is a Qualifying Officer?

Response: The term "Qualifying Officer" means a person who qualifies a candidate for an election.

Question: What are the duties of a Qualifying Officer?

Response: A Qualifying Officer shall notify the Commission via our e-filing system of the names and addresses of all candidates and offices sought in any election within ten days of the close of the qualification period, as well as the outcome of the election.

Question: How does a Qualifying Officer perform his/her duties?

Response: By using the Qualifying Officer Electronic Reporting System (QOERS)
<http://www.ethics.state.ga.us/Efiling/default.aspx>

Question: Does a new Qualifying Officer need to apply for a PIN/Password or can the login information from the previous Qualifying Officer be used?

Response: The PIN that is issued belongs to the location, whereas, the email address and password belong to the Qualifying Officer. Each new Qualifying Officer requires a PIN and Password to access the online filing system; so if the Qualifying Officer within our database is replaced by another Qualifying Officer the replacement Qualifying Officer must submit to the Commission a new Qualifying Officer PIN Application for processing.
<http://media.ethics.ga.gov/Commission/2011Forms/22/FOPIN2011.pdf>

Question: If the county holds the city's election can the county election superintendent be the Qualifying Officer?

Response: Qualifying Officer is defined as a person who qualifies a candidate for election. If the county holds the qualifying for the city then, yes, the county election superintendent is the Qualifying Officer.
<http://ethics.ga.gov/filer-information/qualifying-officers/>

Question: Can the Qualifying Officer still remind officials about report due dates like they did when they were Filing Officers?

Response: There is nothing to prohibit distribution of educational information; however, the Qualifying Officer must distribute accurate information. A file schedule is available on our website.
<http://media.ethics.ga.gov/schedules/ReportFilingScheduleCampaign.aspx>

Question: If a candidate or a Qualifying Officer needs a question answered, who is the best person to email or call?

Response: Candidates are encouraged to seek educational assistance for themselves from the Commission staff and not through their local elections office. Questions can be directed to the Education & Information staff of the Commission. Each member of this Team is knowledgeable in the requirements of the Act as it applies to candidates and public officers. <http://ethics.ga.gov/about-us/contact-us/>

If a Qualifying Officer needs informational assistance in navigating the QOERS, they should first view the tutorial available online, then if they still need assistance contact a member of the Education & Information staff. Each member of this Team is knowledgeable in the requirements of the Act as it applies to Qualifying Officers.

<http://ethics.ga.gov/qualifying-officer/>
<http://ethics.ga.gov/about-us/contact-us/>

Question: Is it the duty of the candidate to submit the DOI to the Commission?

Response: Yes

Question: What should the election superintendent do if the candidate leaves the DOI with them?

Response: An election superintendent should not accept any campaign finance related form or report from a candidate or public officer.

Question: What action should be taken by a local election superintendent if he/she has already accepted such documents?

Response: If a local election superintendent has already accepted such documents they are encouraged to contact the filer and explain the error. Corrective action involves the election superintendent returning the document(s) to the filer who is responsible for submitting the original document(s) to the Georgia Government Transparency & Campaign Finance Commission at their earliest opportunity. Filing such documents at the local level does not satisfy the requirements of the Act.

Question: If a local election superintendent has already accepted such documents as filed at the local level does that meet the reporting requirements of the Act?

Response: No. The campaign finance forms and reports are not considered filed unless and until they are received and processed by the GGT & CFC staff. Filing such documents at the local level does not meet the requirements of the Act.

Question: Is it the duty of an election superintendent (Qualifying Officer) to submit the DOI to the GGT & CFC?

Response: No

Question: I am a Qualifying Officer. Why can't I locate the Notice of Candidacy and Affidavit Form on your website? It isn't under Forms & Publications. I searched everywhere. Can you help?

Response: A Notice of Candidacy and Affidavit is an election form, not a campaign finance form, and will not be found on our website. Visit the Secretary of State's website www.sos.ga.gov to access this form.

Question: Is there a printed publication about campaign finance requirements that can be provided to candidates when they qualify?

Response: The GGT & CFC does not currently provide such a printed publication. All the information previously available in print and distributed by the Commission's Education & Information Division is now available on our website. Visit the website www.ethics.ga.gov. An area is provided for candidate information. <http://ethics.ga.gov/filer-information/candidates-candidate-committees/>

Question: Can a government employee assist with filing disclosure reports?

Response:

1. Government employees may assist and government computers may be used to complete the Personal Financial Disclosure.
2. Government employees may NOT assist and government computers may NOT be used to complete Campaign Contribution Disclosure Reports.
3. The Commission issued an Advisory Opinion on August 5, 2011 to address this question and whether Government employees may assist an official when on their own time (not on the Government's time). Local officials should review their city's or county's charter, ordinances, and policies to see if such assistance is prohibited.

<http://ethics.ga.gov/advisory-opinion-no-2011-05/>

Question: What should a candidate and a Qualifying Officer do if a candidate withdraws from the election?

Response:

1. The candidate should contact the Commission staff to ensure completion of all reporting requirements.
2. The Qualifying Officer should:
Log into the QOERS
Click to edit qualifications
Click to edit the candidate
Click to view outcome
Add the date the candidate withdrew
Log off

Question: If a local candidate chooses to mail in the campaign and finance disclosure reports, will they still be sent a courtesy reminder about due dates for upcoming filings?

Response: No. Only those filers who have provided a valid email address to the Commission will receive the Courtesy Reminders of upcoming report due dates. These notices are a courtesy and it should be remembered that ultimately it's the responsibility of the candidate/public officer to know when reports are due and to file them in a timely manner.

Question: How does a filer know when reports are due?

Response: A file schedule is available on our website
<http://media.ethics.ga.gov/schedules/ReportFilingScheduleCampaign.aspx>
Additionally, courtesy reminders to file upcoming reports are posted on our website prior to report due dates.

Question: Does a candidate need a new PIN Number if he/she is qualifying for re-election (an incumbent) to the same office?

Response: No. Not if the candidate is an incumbent to the same office. The only time a new PIN/Password should be applied for is if there is a break in office (candidate loses the election) or a change in the office (candidate seeks office for a different position).

Question: When is a PFD due for a **local filer** or a **state filer** in an election year?

Response: No later than the 15th day after the candidate qualifies.
<http://ethics.ga.gov/personal-financial-disclosure/>

Question: When is a PFD due for a **state wide candidate** in an election year?

Response: Each person who qualifies with a political party as a candidate for party nomination to a public office elected state wide (including an incumbent public officer elected state wide) files a PFD with the Commission no later than the 7th day after qualifying.
Statewide candidates include: Governor, Attorney General, Commissioner of Agriculture, Commissioner of Insurance, Commissioner of Labor, Lieutenant Governor, Public Service Commission, Secretary of State, State School Superintendent

Question: Where does a filer look on the GGT & CFC website to see if his/her name appears in the late/non-filer list?

Response: Under Search Reports on the website
<http://media.ethics.ga.gov/search/Late/Late ByName.aspx>

Question: What should a filer do if he/she is listed as a delinquent filer and believes that he/she has filed reports?

Response: Submit a detailed email to the Director of Education & Information
bgodwin@ethics.ga.gov describing the issue and requesting research into the matter.

Question: What should a filer do if he/she is listed as a delinquent filer but has extenuating circumstances and would like to have the late filing fees reduced or waived?

Response: No member of the Commission staff is authorized to waive late filing fees. The filer should send a request for consideration to the Executive Secretary to the Commission. hlaberge@ethics.ga.gov The request should provide detailed information regarding why the request is being made.

Question: What should a filer do if the file due date is approaching and he/she hasn't received his/her PIN and Password yet?

Response: First he/she should ask if the documentation was submitted in a timely manner to the Commission staff for processing. If so, then he/she should contact the Commission staff for a status of the CCDR/FD PIN Application.

Question: What does a filer do when he believes he efiled everything correctly but didn't receive a confirmation email from the online file system after submitting a report?

Response: Each filer who submits disclosure reports electronically is provided with the option at the end of the filing process to receive a confirmation email from the online file system that the report was successfully filed. If the filer chooses not to do this then no confirmation email is sent by the computer program. A filer can log-in to the online file system <http://media.ethics.ga.gov/Login/default.aspx> and view reports he/she has submitted. A status is provided for each report ("working report" or "filed"). "Working Report" by definition is a report that has been started but has not been submitted.

Question: Can a city or county filer submit paper disclosure reports instead of filing electronically?

Response: Yes. City and county filers may use electronic means to file their campaign contribution disclosure reports with the Commission or they may file paper disclosure reports by Certified Mail or statutory Overnight Delivery. Any other method of delivering paper reports is unacceptable.

Question: How does a local filer check to see if his/her paper disclosure report filing is in the Commission's system and viewable by the public?

Response: Filers can look themselves up by name under Search Reports on the GGT & CFC website. The system will show the date received/postmarked. Only disclosure reports electronically filed with the Commission using the online file system are viewable in full detail.

Question: Is there a comprehensive list of rules and regulations on campaign finance filings for local officials?

Response: Yes. The Campaign Finance Act is available on our website. <http://media.ethics.ga.gov/Commission/pdf/EthicsInGovernmentAct.pdf>