

WEST VIRGINIA CODE: §3-12-10

§3-12-10. Certification of candidates.

(a) To be certified, a participating candidate shall apply to the State Election Commission for public campaign financing from the fund and file a sworn statement that he or she has complied and will comply with all requirements of this article throughout the applicable campaign.

(b) Upon receipt of a notice from the Secretary of State that a participating candidate has received the required number and amount of qualifying contributions, the State Election Commission shall determine whether the candidate or candidate's committee:

- (1) Has signed and filed a declaration of intent as required by section seven of this article;
- (2) Has obtained the required number and amount of qualifying contributions as required by section nine of this article;
- (3) Has complied with the contribution restrictions of this article;
- (4) Is eligible, as provided in section nine, article five of this chapter, to appear on the nonpartisan judicial election ballot; and
- (5) Has met all other requirements of this article.

(c) The State Election Commission shall process applications in the order they are received and shall verify a participating candidate's compliance with the requirements of subsection (b) of this section by using the verification and sampling techniques approved by the State Election Commission.

(d) The State Election Commission shall determine whether to certify a participating candidate as eligible to receive public campaign financing no later than three business days after the candidate or the candidate's committee makes his or her final report of qualifying contributions or, if a challenge is filed under subsection (g) of this section, no later than six business days after the candidate or the candidate's committee makes his or her final report of qualifying contributions. A certified candidate shall comply with this article through the nonpartisan judicial election campaign period.

(e) No later than two business days after the State Election Commission certifies that a participating candidate is eligible to receive public campaign financing under this section, the State Election Commission, acting in concert with the State Auditor's office and the State Treasurer's office, shall cause a check to be issued to the candidate's campaign depository account an amount equal to the public campaign financing benefit for which the candidate qualifies under section eleven of this article, minus the candidate's qualifying contributions, and shall notify all other candidates for the same office of its determination.

(f) If the candidate desires to receive public financing benefits by electronic transfer, the candidate shall include in his or her application sufficient information and authorization for the State Treasurer to transfer payments to his or her campaign depository account.

(g) Any person may challenge the validity of any contribution listed by a participating candidate by filing a written challenge with the State Election Commission setting forth any reason why the contribution should not be accepted as a qualifying contribution. If a contribution is challenged under this subsection, the State Election Commission shall decide the validity of the challenge no later than the end of the next business day after the day that the challenge is filed, unless the State Election Commission determines that the candidate whose contribution is challenged has both a sufficient qualifying number and amount of qualifying contributions to be certified as a candidate under this section without considering the challenge. Within five business days of a challenge, the candidate or candidate's committee who listed any contribution that is the subject of a challenge may file a report with the State Election Commission of an additional contribution collected pursuant to section nine of this article for consideration as a qualifying contribution.

(h) A candidate's certification and receipt of public campaign financing may be revoked by the State Election Commission, if the candidate violates this article. A certified candidate who violates this article shall repay all moneys received from the fund to the State Election Commission.

(i) The determination of any issue before the State Election Commission is the final administrative determination. Any meetings conducted by the State Elections Commission to certify a candidate's eligibility to receive funds under this article shall not be subject the public notice and open meeting requirements of article nine-a, chapter six of this code, but the commission shall concurrently provide public notice of any decision and determination it makes which impacts the candidate's eligibility to receive funds pursuant to this article. Any person adversely affected by a decision of the State Election Commission under this article may appeal that decision to the circuit court of Kanawha County.

(j) A candidate may withdraw from being a certified candidate and become a nonparticipating candidate at any time with the approval of the State Election Commission. Any candidate seeking to withdraw shall file a written request with the State Election Commission, which shall consider requests on a case-by-case basis. No certified candidate may withdraw until he or she has repaid all moneys received from the fund: Provided, That the State Election Commission may, in exceptional circumstances, waive the repayment requirement. The State Election Commission may assess a penalty not to exceed \$10,000 against any candidate who withdraws without approval.