

Petitioning Guide & Tips – MWRD 2018 © Illinois Green Party 2018

Who can circulate the petition?

- Circulators must be 18 years old and US citizens. They do not have to be registered Illinois voters or even Illinois residents. However, a circulator cannot circulate our petitions if they have circulated a petition for the candidate of another party, or for an independent candidate, for the 2018 primary or general election.

Who can sign the petition?

- Petitions must be signed by registered voters who live within the boundaries of the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District. Nearly all of Cook County is inside the MWRD, so it's easiest to just ask voters if they live in Cook County – we will scratch anyone from municipalities that lie outside the MWRD before turn-in.

Printing and filling out petitions:

- The digital version of the petition can be found online on the volunteer sign-up page, <http://www.mwr-ilgp.org/volunteer>. If you print petition copies, they must be on letter (8.5 x 11) paper.
- Do not alter any of the text on the petition! The boilerplate information on the top and bottom must be identical.
- **DO NOT NUMBER YOUR PETITION SHEETS!** Sheets will be numbered by the coordinators later.
- You can fill out the circulator information at the bottom at any time, including filling it out on one sheet and then photocopying that sheet to save yourself having to fill in the information repeatedly, but **DO NOT SIGN THE CIRCULATOR LINE UNLESS YOU ARE IN THE PRESENCE OF A NOTARY!** You can get sheets notarized on your own (most banks will notarize for their members, or some public libraries offer notary services), or you can come to one of our turn-in events, at which we will have notaries available.

Getting ready to go out:

- Get the easiest signatures first: your family, friends, co-workers, neighbors, and yourself! Create a list of prospects in advance to help you get the easiest signatures. Have more pens than clipboards on hand – just in case. Have more petitions on hand than you think you need.
- If you're carrying different petitions, have at least one clipboard for each type of petition. It's also a good idea to put a Green Party sign-up sheet with spaces for phone/email under the petitions. If someone's interested in follow-up from the campaign, have them leave that contact info (you can copy their address from their petition).

Where to circulate:

- Farmer's markets, large festivals or public events; train stops and platforms, particularly when people are waiting for the train, not leaving to get to work or home. Get a group together! People waiting anywhere, such as crowds outside concert venues or people standing along parade routes.
- If going door to door, 6-8pm is the best time on weekdays, or during daytime hours on weekends.

Tips on collecting signatures – what to say:

- Always be courteous. Start with the simplest and most important question: “Are you registered to vote in Cook County?” A “Yes” allows you to ask the next question: “Can you help put Green Party candidates on the ballot for the Water Reclamation Board with a petition signature today?”
- Avoid discussions. If you are spending more than 2 minutes trying to convince someone to sign, you’re wasting your time.
- If a person has moved but hasn't updated their voter registration, they should put the address that matches where their registration will be at the end of the filing period, June 4th. In other words, they should list their old address, unless they are sure they will update their information with the state before June 4th.
- Be sure all information is complete and legible before parting with your signer. If you can't read part of their address, ask them for the information and edit. If necessary, have them sign again and print legibly on a new line. You can alter/correct any part **EXCEPT** their signature. If necessary, you can write out the whole address for them, so long as it's their signature.
- When encountering hostiles: Simply back off, wish them a good day, and continue to the next possible signer.
- When a location yields few if any signatures within say, 20 minutes, move on to some other area. Adapt to the circumstances. A good average rate is 10 signatures per hour. If you're getting less than that, relocate.

Technical notes on circulating the petition:

- All voters must sign the petition in your presence. You can't leave it on a table and have people sign it while you're not around.
- If a voter uses “ditto marks” or abbreviations, it is legally okay for you to write in the appropriate information. **THE ONLY THING YOU CANNOT WRITE IN FOR THEM IS THEIR SIGNATURE.**
- Voters signing the petition must sign their name the same way they did when they originally registered to vote. Common problems involve people with hyphenated last names and people who use their middle names but tend to fill out government paperwork with their first names.
- Make sure the voters sign in the signature column and print in the printed name column! If they mistakenly do the reverse, have them skip to the next line and start over. We'll have a candidate cross out the bad line. **DO NOT STRIKE OUT LINES YOURSELF.** Just leave errors in place. A candidate will strike the bad line and certify the strike during the final preparation process.
- You have the right to petition on the public right-of-way and in public spaces. However, feel free to move on if asked – just let the campaign know who told you to move, and where/when.

Answering voters' questions:

- People can sign the petition and go on to vote for whomever they like. They commit to nothing by signing, and signing will not affect a person's party affiliation for future elections.
- A lot of people will ask if their names will be “put on a list”. It will not. The petitions are submitted to the State Board of Elections for verification purposes and that's all. We will not contact them based on their signature.