

Santa Clara Elections – Getting Involved

The City of Santa Clara and Santa Clara WEEKLY have partnered in a series of four articles outlining what it means to serve, how to file to run for office, the basic elements of a political campaign and other community involvement options. The City will also show a series of video vignettes on cable channel 15 and on the City's website in the next few weeks.

Public Service in Santa Clara: Paperwork and Public Disclosure

Part 2 in a series of 4

It is important to recognize that while maintaining rights as an American, candidates become public figures when running for elected office. As such, various reporting and filing obligations are required to provide access to information for the public, as they consider who will best represent them.

The first process is the declaration of candidacy and creation of a political campaign committee. These reports are meant to identify who is running for office and provide sunshine into political fundraising. A candidate will declare their candidacy using Fair Political Practices Commission (FPPC) Form 501 and the City's Declaration of Candidacy Statement. They'll then file Form 410 to generate a campaign ID Number and start fundraising, or a Form 470 if they choose not to raise or spend more than \$1,000. Candidates are also obligated to file FPPC Form 460 on a schedule provided for the election cycle, which outlines where funds are raised and spent in pursuit of public office.

The bulk of these documents can be found in the Preliminary Candidate's Guide available on the City website or at the City Clerk's Office. Additionally, the City of Santa Clara is hosting a free FPPC Candidate and Treasurer workshop at City Hall on July 26 from 7 to 9 p.m. Those interested in attending should RSVP to the City Clerk's Office.

The second process is formally "pulling" and filing nomination papers. These can only be issued by the City Clerk's Office and allow the candidate's name and statement of qualifications to be included in the voter information guide.

Nomination papers are available on July 16 and are due by August 10, 2012. Candidates are required to gather at least 20, and up to 30, signatures of registered Santa Clara voters to qualify. An optional 200-word Candidate's Statement of Qualifications may also be filed at a cost of \$2,169, or \$1,084 if the candidate accepts the voluntary expenditure limit of \$36,800. Additional forms indicating a Chinese given name or Vietnamese name accents, if

needed, are also provided. An FPPC Form 700 is also required. The FPPC Form 700 outlines potential economic conflicts of interest. The Santa Clara County Registrar of Voters is hosting a free Candidate School covering the nomination process on July 14, 2012, from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.. Call (408) 299-8639 to RSVP for the event.

Although there is a significant amount of paperwork, the public relies on these filings for information about the candidates. While this is a basic outline, there are more resources available to help interested parties through the process. Contact the City Clerk's Office at (408) 615-2220 to schedule a more thorough review, or the FPPC directly at (866) ASK-FPPC.

This series provides a summary that pertains to most candidates, but certainly will not cover all of the complex nuances of the process. The City and Santa Clara WEEKLY do not provide political or legal advice. It is the obligation of the candidate to learn and adapt as required for each effort's unique needs.