



STATE OF MICHIGAN  
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DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
LANSING

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Optional procedure for collection and submission of candidate petition signatures in digital form

The Eastern District of Michigan's [Order](#) of April 20, 2020 in *Esshaki et al. v. Whitmer et. al.*, requires the Director of Elections to produce "regulations providing for an additional optional procedure that allows the collection and submission of ballot petition signatures in digital form by electronic means such as email."

Below are regulations providing for digital signature collection and submission. This method of signature collection is optional and is available only for candidates who:

1. Filed a statement of organization under the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971, 52 U.S.C. §§ 30101 et seq., or established a candidate committee under the Michigan Campaign Finance Law, Mich. Comp. Laws, §§ 169.201 et seq., before March 10, 2020.
2. Are required by a relevant section of the Michigan Election Law, Mich. Comp. Laws, §§ 168.1 et seq., or city charter provision to file a nominating petition by April 21, 2020, for the purpose of appearing on the August 4, 2020, primary
3. Do not have the option under Michigan Election Law to appear on the August 4, 2020, primary election ballot through the payment of a filing fee instead of filing a nominating petition.

Candidates who meet these requirements have the option of collecting digital signatures as provided below:

1. Candidates, petition circulators, or petition signers may download blank, downloadable [County wide Nominating Petition Partisan](#) and [County wide Nominating Petition Non-Partisan](#) petition sheets from the Michigan Bureau of Elections website. To enable digital signature collection, digital petition sheets may deviate from statutory requirements for paper size (allowing 8.5 x 11 instead of just the statutory requirement of 8.5 x 14 inches) formatting, font, and type-size requirements that would otherwise apply.

2. Downloaded petition sheets may be printed and signed in the same manner as traditional paper petition sheets. Signers must provide their physical signature. The signature will be matched against the qualified voter file for each individual, as on traditional paper petition sheets.

3. Signatures must be witnessed by circulators. The petition circulator statement, which requires that a signature be witnessed, may be satisfied by:

- (a) Having each signer/one signer per household witness their own household's signature and complete the circulator statement; or
- (b) A signature may be witnessed remotely through methods described and allowed under [Executive Order 2020-41](#), issued by Governor Whitmer on April 8, 2020.

4. Petition circulators (including a petition signer witnessing his or her own signature) may send signed petition sheets to candidates using electronic means. A petition circulator may scan or photograph petition sheets for purpose of sending them electronically, as long as the entirety of the petition sheet, including all signatures, is visible.

5. Candidates may file digital petition sheets subject to the following requirements:

- (a) Petition sheets must be on white paper only
- (b) Candidates must either
  - (i) file all sheets as one packet, containing enough signatures to meet the minimum signature threshold
  - (ii) Email signed, witnessed petition sheets in electronic form as a single .pdf document, containing enough signatures to meet the minimum signature threshold. Candidates may not file digital sheets separately - they must be included in a single document.
  - (iii) If a candidate is unable to submit a sufficient number of signature sheets in a single .pdf file because of file size limitations on electronic file transfer, the Bureau of Elections may permit submission of signature sheets in multiple files, but only the minimum number of files needed to enable file transfer within file size limits. The Bureau will not permit candidates to submit individual sheets or small numbers of sheets as separate files.

6. Digital sheets can be combined with ink signatures collected on paper to meet minimum signature requirements. If a candidate wishes to combine signature formats in this manner, the candidate may:

- (a) print the email sheets, combine them with paper sheets, and submit them all on paper,
- (b) scan the paper sheets, combine them with the email sheets, and submit them all electronically as provided in 5(b(ii), or
- (c) submit the paper sheets on paper and submit the email sheets electronically as provided in 5(b(ii) at the same time; provided that, regardless of method, the original filing meets the minimum signature requirements.

7. Other existing requirements, including the requirement that each petition be filed with the appropriate filing official, are unchanged. City, township, and county clerks should establish protocols to accept digital petition sheets filed electronically similar to those described above.

The digital method described above is optional. Candidates may continue to submit physical, ink-and-paper signatures; for example, by mailing petition sheets.