

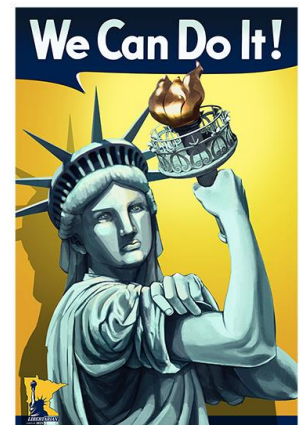


# LPMN Candidate Handbook

**For Local and General Elections**

## **Libertarian Party of Minnesota**

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<https://www.lpmn.org/>



This booklet was compiled in Jan. 2016, by current LPMN Political Director (former 2014 Gubernatorial Nominee) Chris Holbrook; by plagiarizing and amalgamating other Libertarian papers, authors, and directors like Ron Crickenberger, Michael Cloud, and Carla Howell from the Libertarian National Committee. In addition special thanks to Amie Parsons of the Libertarian Party of Texas, whose manual we are trying to mimic. If any of you see this and don't like it, call and bitch. Otherwise thank you for the inspiration and leadership!

Thank you for stepping forward instead of sitting on your hands. Thank you for speaking up instead of being silent. Thank you for fighting and not giving up. You are among friends. We do this because we believe in each other over authority. We hold sacred the rights of the individual over the 'collective good'. We demand liberty over tyranny.

*"Society is produced by our wants, and government by our wickedness; the former promotes our happiness positively by uniting our affections, the latter negatively by restraining our vices." -Thomas Paine*

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# How to Begin

1. Know what you believe in, and hopefully it's roughly 90% of our Platform, available on LPMN.org.
2. Decide what you want to do and do it. If you need help deciding which path to act on, talk to one of us in the party. Read some of the PDF's about what's involved; as on LPMN.org; like 'effective campaigning', 'libertarian communications', and 'raising money'.

*"Do one thing well, not three things half way."*

*-Ron Crickenberger.*

3. If you want to run as a nominated candidate of the Libertarian Party of Minnesota (which we like) you need to be a member (details/sign up can be found on LPMN.org). You can also ask to be endorsed instead, membership not required (not preferred, but available).
4. Regardless you need to submit an application for review and approval for the LPMN Executive Committee or State Convention. There is a copy of this application in the appendix. Guess where else you can find it? Yeah, that's right, LPMN.org. You can also contact a LPMN EC rep or CD leader to meet with to go over this in person. We may ask you to come to an EC meeting or convention as part of the approval process, ending with a vote.

## **TIPS FROM JUDGE JIM GRAY**

*(2012 Libertarian Vice Presidential Nominee)*

1. Live in reality.
2. Be honest.
3. Do what's right and fair.
4. Make a plan and execute it.
5. Organize.
6. Communicate.
7. Do what needs doing.
8. Don't hesitate.
9. Treat people well and say thank you!
10. Have fun!

# Filing Requirements

Your #1 priority is to get on the ballot.

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Go to the website for the Minnesota Secretary of State and find the important need-to-know details on your election; like what paperwork you are required to file and with who, what are the filing deadlines, what are the filing fees, and what are the campaign finance reporting requirements. Requirements vary depending on office sought. It is your job to know them and fulfill them.

A quick example '*must-do list*' - if running for a (partisan) Minnesota State Senator or Representative office in a general election campaign; you need to:

- submit an Affidavit of Candidacy by May 31,
- with a Nominating Petition of 500 signatures,
- with a filing fee of \$100 (or petition).
- afterwards you must submit timely reporting to the Campaign Finance Board once your campaign surpasses a \$750 budget.

Everything you need to do and how is at the Minnesota Secretary of State website at <http://www.sos.state.mn.us/>. We at the Libertarian Party of Minnesota are happy to assist. That's what we're for, but again the responsibility for this is ultimately yours.

Note: municipal races/school district elections are non-partisan. Candidates do not run under a label. They typically have much later deadlines, lower fees, and lower petition requirements, if any. Verify with your courthouse or city hall; some have an occasional different requirement.

## What To Expect

You are responsible for your own campaign, financially and otherwise. There is no "someone else" who automatically does it for you. However in many races the LPMN can be, and wants to be, a valuable resource at your disposal. Most of our Minnesota Congressional Districts (in MN we have 8) have organized LPMN CD leaders and CD affiliates. They are there to contact and help support you.

Some of our LPMN CD's do not have organization and leaders at various times, so that support can vary in strength during different cycles. Support directly from the LPMN State Party can also be available.

The resources that the LPMN typically can provide to Candidates come in the forms of people, networking, and information. We have membership. Thus we have volunteers who give time and talent. It can be in the form of gathering petition signatures, passing out literature, knocking on doors, providing technology tools, marketing templates, voting data, and even donations and recruitment for your fund raisers.

The Libertarian Party of Minnesota *at will* supports different races differently.

It is strongly advised that you read something about running for office or campaigning sooner rather than later (such as the booklets mentioned earlier on LPMN.org). You need to define a goal and create a plan.  
We can help advise, but this is really on you!

## What kind of Libertarian are you anyways?

You are a great Libertarian! You are committed to acting. Persons who run as a Candidate for the Libertarian Party of Minnesota make a significant contribution towards protecting our freedom and defending our natural rights, both in our state and in our country.

You are helping work on the goal of promoting peace, promoting fiscal responsibility, and promoting social liberty. The Libertarian Party of Minnesota is committed to putting liberty minded individuals like you on the ballot and into office, to hold government accountable and to restrain its abuses by limiting its size and scope.

As a current '*minor party*' or '*third party*' (albeit the largest one of those there is) we have to be realistic that we are currently limited in what is truly winnable. Limiting options is something the '*duopoly*' is really, really good at.

There are basically three different ways of putting yourself forth as a Candidate. Each has great value and is a win for the LPMN, despite a ballot victory or not.

1. **Paper Candidate.** This is someone who signs and files the paperwork to get his/her name on the ballot, but does not actively campaign. These Candidates are vital. They add numbers to our totals. They give all voters an option. Time and money investment is very minimal.
2. **Informational (Educational) Candidate.** This is one step further than a Paper Candidate. This is someone who then goes on to educate and inform voters with Libertarian solutions. They submit editorials and questionnaires; do interviews; appear at debates and forums, and so on. This Candidate can raise an issue to public awareness and hold an incumbent accountable by forcing a response. These types of campaigns may be run for less than \$750, but will require more time than *zero*.
3. **Contender Candidate.** This is a race that *could* produce a winner. Knowing the likelihood, the demographics, the voting history, using a divisive issue or identifying vulnerability of opposition, or not having opposition are things that in part or whole need to lean favorable for success. These races can cost little to many thousands, which can require further financial resources, fundraising, reporting, and a larger campaign team. These types of races also get the largest support from the LPMN because a) they need it, and b) elected officials are the ultimate goal.

No matter what type of candidate you become, you will be having an effect on Minnesota state and local policies. You are automatically bringing presence and pressure that someone will notice and address. You will be helping to grow the Libertarian Party. You will be a role model for other liberty candidates. So again, thank you!

Gallup polling (as recent as Sept. 2014) consistently shows that >58% of Americans want a third political party. One challenge is that they do not get out and vote that way enough, not yet, as approximately 90% of incumbents get reelected.

# Top 10 (11) Things To Do

1. **Fill out and submit all required paperwork**, on time!
2. **Get an Employer Identification Number (EIN)** for your campaign from the IRS if you predict your budget will exceed \$750, which it typically does in an active campaign. (If under \$750, you are usually allowed to report any campaign finances using your SSN.)
3. **Open a campaign business bank account (checking)**. You must keep campaign funds separate from your personal finances.
4. **Build a team**. At minimum you want an official Treasurer (often a spouse), someone who is not the Candidate. While not ideal, the Candidate can be his/her own Campaign Manager in 'smaller' races. (In larger races you'll need separate C.M., T., Fundraiser, Volunteer/Event Coordinator, Marketing/Media Chief, and possibly other roles).
5. **Set your goal**. Be realistic. What type of candidate will you be? How many votes are possible? How much money will you spend or limit yourself to spend? What issue do you want accountability-discussion on?
6. **Create a plan to accomplish your goal**. What will the strategy be? Who or what will you target? Using what tactics? On what timeline? What is the budget? How much time and help will you need?
7. **Seek free exposure**, aka 'earned media'. Get head shot, short bio, and statement/principles on the LPMN website. Also submit it to your local paper with an announcement on your candidacy; listing a FEW, BRIEF talking points. Write a letter to the editor. Make it easy for people to spread the word and to find you. Return any media inquiries immediately!
8. **Campaign materials**. Get stickers or buttons, door hangers or palm cards, print fliers or biz cards. Go for quantity and simplicity, not expensive promotions. Things you and your team can hand out everywhere you go.
9. **Walk the block**. Meet as many people as possible. You'll find liberty voters and liberty promoters, as well as the opposite. Most of us don't have a lot of time, so keep exchanges short and sweet. Make it personal.
10. **Raise some money**. See suggestions on LPMN.org, but make sure to ask family and friends! Don't be shy. They are your most important and loyal supporters; happy to help and admiring your activism.

11. **Have fun!** Enjoy your time, smile, laugh, be proud, be confident. You are acting on the right side of liberty!

## Slogans, Proposals, Talking Points

**Have a simple slogan.** (*a one sentence pitch*) There are many slogans that Libertarians use in partisan races. If one fits you, great. If not, find others. Make your own. Some examples:

- "Socially Liberal. Economically Conservative."
- "Smaller government is better government."
- "Less government, more freedom."
- "Your mind, your body, your property are yours."
- "Not Left, Not Right, Libertarian."
- "Leave people alone."

**Have a few bold, specific proposals that promote less government.** (*an 'elevator speech'*) You can keep things general in messaging; but know at least one issue inside and out. Be prepared to delve into further details *when asked*. Some examples:

- repealing a certain law (and why).
- eliminating a specific tax (and what that line item 'theft' costs us).
- opposing a spending project (or drastic reduction >25%).

When '*selling*' your details, use a specific story example in tandem with any statistics. That brings emotional appeal to the surface. What is the *benefit*?  
Think problem-solution-benefit.

*"People forget what you said. People forget what you did. But people do not forget how you made them feel." -Maya Angelou*

**Repetition, consistency, simplicity are key.** Create and repeat a few bullet points that make good sound bites or bumper stickers. Two or three is enough. Some examples:

- "Repeal the prohibition on marijuana."
- "Reduce insurance costs. End Obamacare."
- "Educational choice should be local, not federal."
- "Replace income tax on the few with a fair/flat tax on all."
- "I'm the only choice for smaller government, less spending, less taxation."



# Top 10 (11) Mistakes

1. Spending time, money, and effort on things that don't get you on the ballot before you actually secure being on the ballot. *The #1 priority is to be on the ballot!*
2. Failing to file the correct forms and applications by the required deadlines.
3. Setting unrealistic or immeasurable goals; or not having a (campaign) plan to achieve those goals.
4. Neglecting to use Libertarian resources, in particular volunteers and networking.
5. Not having a website or a listing on a website. Denying the power of social media and technological networking.
6. Refusing to accept money on moral grounds.
7. Not attending or participating in community events such as forums and fairs, or being a wall flower at them.
8. Unclear messaging on Libertarian solutions of small government that clearly contrast big government status quo establishment.
9. Not studying, preparing, and practicing; on issues and on opposition; for a panel discussion, debate, or interview.
10. Neglecting to show appreciation to those who donate time and money.
11. Taking the advice of non-Libertarians.

# Getting out there and talking to people

*"I resolve to sell liberty by appealing to the self-interest of each prospect, rather than by preaching to people and expecting them to suddenly adopt my ideas of right and wrong." -Harry Browne  
(Libertarian National Committee Presidential Nominee 1996/2000)*

Are you prepared to start talking to people? You'll figure it out as you go, but when you start telling folks that you are running for office, you will get one of two responses:

1. They will be proud of you! (curious and supportive).
2. They will try to discredit you. (misery loves company).

Regardless, there are a few questions and objections that you will find common. Be prepared! Have some ideas in mind to overcome some objections. Have the story of YOU ready to explain! Here are a few of the most common:

Objection: "Libertarians can't win/don't win."

Some responses: "We do have winning Libertarians" (i.e. in Minnesota in 2016 there are 5 elected city council Libertarians); or "Everything starts somewhere".

Objection: "Voting Libertarian is a waste of a vote."

Some responses: "It's not a waste to vote for who you support, versus who you oppose": or "Voter's votes are theirs to give, not a party's (or yours) to control".

Objection: "Why can't Libertarians attract big money or a big name?"

Some responses: "Big government controls big money, and vice versa.", or "Our money comes from individuals, not corporations".

Question: "When and why did you become a Libertarian?"

Question: "What made you decide to run for office?"

Question: "What do you hope to accomplish?"

Be aware that some questions are simply to derail and discredit you. You should practice re-directing off-message inquiries back into your issues. You don't have to be a know it all and answer everything. It's okay to say 'I don't know'; or 'I'll get back to you'; followed with 'but here's the real issue...'

# A Final Top 10 List, just for fun!

*General tips for Libertarian candidates - from a real pro!*

In 2012 Governor Gary Johnson and Judge Jim Gray received the most Libertarian votes ever in the Presidential race, over 1M. These tips were derived from speeches, conversations, and comments they shared during the 2014 Libertarian National Committee Convention.

## **TIPS FROM GOVERNOR GARY JOHNSON**

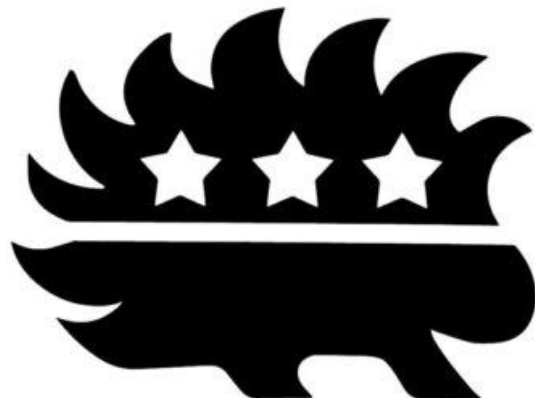
*(2012 Libertarian Presidential Nominee)*

1. Don't kill yourself. You don't have to do everything. Stay loose, have fun, and resist pressure. Make sure you don't burn out to the point of regretting getting involved or to the point of never doing it again.
2. Stay positive on your message. Try not to attack.
3. Be friendly and agreeable as much as you can. Start by listening in conversations more than you talk. Don't try to prove people wrong, just try to lead them to liberty solutions.
4. Tell stories that give examples of your principles and virtues instead of just stating what they are. Emotional appeals win the day.
5. Try to lead with speaking about Liberal qualities first (like civil rights) and speak about Conservative qualities second (typically fiscal).
6. In speeches don't apologize, don't waste time acknowledging and thanking (generally) and don't tell jokes (except an occasional zinger).
7. Work the media, work the media, work the media. In particular new, cheap, and free avenues (Facebook, Twitter, local radio and papers, etc.)
8. TV commercials are generally overpriced and ineffective advertising vs. tangible marketing pieces like yard signs and door hangers.
9. Try to attract and spread the word to DFL and minority groups more so than GOP and tea party types. a.k.a. don't preach to your own choir. Also don't bang your fist trying to convert entrenched people.
10. Don't be shy about asking for money.

# Appendix

***1. Application for Candidate Nomination or Endorsement***

***2. Candidate Agreement Form for General Elections***





## Application for Candidate Nomination or Endorsement- Libertarian Party of Minnesota

*Please complete this form and submit it (electronically or otherwise) to a member of the Executive Committee of the Libertarian Party of Minnesota (the LPMN EC). Contacts and leadership are listed on the LPMN website. This information is for internal party vetting purposes use only, and will be treated as confidential within the LPMN EC, unless noted and consented otherwise.*

*Any candidate seeking a nomination or endorsement by the LPMN for any office (Federal, State, Municipal, other) must provide this information for consideration, whether at the LPMN State Convention (annual) or internally within the LPMN EC (meets monthly).*

### Choose one:

I'm seeking to be nominated by the LPMN as a Libertarian candidate.

I'm seeking to be endorsed by the LPMN as a candidate of another party or independent. (if so, other party: \_\_\_\_\_)

## **Biographical Information**

Legal Name:

Full Address:

Preferred Email:

Preferred Phone:

Public Address, Email, and Phone, *(if different from above)*:

Employer and Occupation:

Birth date:

Hometown:

- Last Educational Institution and Special Achievements:
- Previous Political Experience (*Have you ever run for office before? Have you ever been an active member of another party or worked on any campaigns?*)
- Have you ever been convicted of a crime (*other than minor traffic violations*)?
- Is there anything in your past that may embarrass yourself, your family, your employer, or the Libertarian Party if it were to come out in a campaign? :
- What areas do you consider as your personal strengths?
- What areas do you think you need some personal improvement or coaching with?
- Have you been an active member in your community? What organizations do you belong to?

## **Campaign Information**

- What office will you be seeking? How long have you lived in that district?
- Do you currently hold a leadership position in any organization?
- What is your availability/time commitment?

- Are you willing to put your own money into the campaign?  
Approximately how much? How much are you targeting to raise?
- Have you written a campaign plan? If so, please attach.
- Do you have a campaign manager and treasurer? Do you have other designated volunteers? Please list.
- Do you know at least five people who would be willing to assist with your campaign?
- Do you have a website, or will you get one? If so, what is the address?  
(All partisan candidates must commit to developing a website.)
- Do you have a way for contributors to donate to your campaign?  
(i.e. paypal, campaign bank account, other)

## **Political Vetting Information**

What are your 3 main platform points for seeking this office? What issues will you put at the forefront of your campaign? (Please include any campaign literature you may have.)

#1)

#2)

#3)

In what specific ways are you different than the other candidates seeking your office?

**Briefly** (1-2 sentences), tell us your stances on the following issues :

State Sovereignty

---

Gay Marriage

---

Eminent Domain and/or Forced Annexation

---

Property Taxes/Income Taxes/Sales Taxes

---

Government Spending

---

Gun Laws

---

Public Education

---

Social Security

---

Healthcare/Medicare

---

Welfare

---

Minimum Wage

---

Business Regulations

---

Smoking Bans

---

Abortion

---



Immigration

---

Drug War

---

Military/National Defense/Foreign Wars

---

Other

---

Last, you will need to provide a headshot, short biography, and campaign summary statement (less than 200 words) that can be placed on the LPMN website. This may be submitted now, or after confirmation, but it will be necessary for all candidates. If available now please attach.

***By submitting this form, you confirm that all the information you've provided in this form is accurate and true and represents you..***

***Date of submission:***

***Signature:***

The job of the Libertarian Party of Minnesota is to serve you!  
We are available to answer your questions via phone or email.

Please do not hesitate to contact us for assistance or  
consultation. Thank you!

# Candidate Agreement Form for General Elections

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Office sought: \_\_\_\_\_

Note: The Libertarian Party of Minnesota tries to help candidates as much as possible, but is not contractually bound to provide any product or service. In addition, the Libertarian Party of Minnesota does not provide legal services, advice, or counsel. Please refer to the Minnesota Secretary of State for political electoral legal guidance.

As a candidate seeking nomination of the Libertarian Party of Minnesota, I understand that I am responsible for my own campaign. I understand that I am responsible to submit the required filing and recording to the appropriate governmental offices as necessary, to appear on the ballot and to stay on the ballot, in order to run a legitimate general election campaign.

I understand the Libertarian Party of Minnesota will provide at-will assistance where applicable, as agreed upon in request and consultation, but that ultimately I am responsible for all campaign needs, including but not limited to managing, reporting, marketing, and fundraising.

During my campaign I will hold true to the platform of the Libertarian Party of Minnesota, which I have read and understand (as it appears on LPMN.org). Unless disclosed prior, I will not deviate from these principles while campaigning, as it could hurt the Party's message and that of other candidates.

I would like to seek nomination of the Libertarian Party of Minnesota.

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_