

# **How to Run for Stamford Municipal Elective Office 2025 Guide**



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## INTRODUCTION

Thank you for your interest in learning more about running for elected office in Stamford! This document was created by the Stamford Democratic City Committee (SDCC) and is consistent with our mission to elect Democrats up and down the ballot. This is a general guide and reference for the elective process and provides links to more detailed information from direct sources. Choosing to serve in public office is an important decision - it is essential to have a clear understanding of what it takes to be a Democratic candidate and serve in office. Please take time to review the enclosed information as part of your due diligence before deciding to run.

## ELECTION TIMELINE

Below is the municipal election calendar for 2025 as issued by the Connecticut Secretary of State's office. For more detailed information, please visit: [SOTS Municipal Election Calendar](#)

<b>Stamford DCC Party Endorsement</b>	<b>Sunday, July 20, 2025 at 3:00 PM</b>
<b>Party Endorsement Certification</b>	<b>Monday, July 21, 2025</b>
<b>Primary Petitions Available</b>	Available the day after the Party endorsements from the Registrar of Voters office
<b>Primary Petitions Filed</b>	<b>Wednesday, August 6, 2025</b> Must be submitted by 4:00 PM to the Registrar of Voters office
<b>Start of Early Voting Period (Primary)</b>	<b>Tuesday, September 2, 2025</b>
<b>Primary Election</b>	<b>Tuesday, September 9, 2025</b>
<b>Start of Early Voting Period (General)</b>	<b>Monday, October 20, 2025</b>
<b>General Election</b>	<b>Tuesday, November 4, 2025</b>

## BECOMING A DEMOCRATIC ENDORSED CANDIDATE

Below are the steps to becoming a candidate and seeking the Democratic endorsement.

1. A prospective Democratic candidate must be registered as a voter in Stamford and be registered with the Democratic Party.
  - Voter Registration: [SOTS Voter Registration Lookup](#)
  - Voting District: [Stamford Voting Locations](#)
2. Prospective candidates should contact the Democratic City Committee by sending an email to [info@stamforddems.com](mailto:info@stamforddems.com) to state their interest and obtain more information about running.
3. Prospective candidates should attend information sessions about running for office offered by the SDCC and other organizations. They should be familiar with the responsibilities of the office they seek as well as understand the current issues and other practical matters relating to that office.
4. Prospective candidates seeking the endorsement of the Stamford Democratic Party will first fill out the [Application for Political Office](#), which can be found on the SDCC website. Once an application and resume are received, the SDCC Screening Subcommittee will review the information and may invite the applicant for an official interview. The committee will then make recommendations of nominees for office to the full SDCC prior to voting.
5. The full Democratic City Committee will meet to nominate and endorse municipal candidates in July 2025 per the election calendar previously listed. To be endorsed, a prospective candidate's name must be put into nomination by an SDCC member, seconded by another member and then receive a majority vote.
6. Once endorsed, all candidates must immediately file the SEEC Form 1 and Form 1A or 1B with the Town Clerk within 10 days of becoming a candidate. When completing SEEC Form 1, the candidate must indicate how their campaign will be funded, either by completing SEEC Form 1A (if registering a candidate committee) or by completing SEEC Form 1B (if filing an exemption from forming a candidate committee).  
Links to those forms can be found here: [SEEC Municipal Election Campaign Overview](#)

## HOW TO PRIMARY TO GAIN THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY ENDORSEMENT

If a candidate does not receive the Democratic Party endorsement, the candidate may seek to challenge the endorsed party candidate by petitioning to force a primary election. To primary, a candidate must:

1. Obtain signatures of at least 5% of registered Democrats that reside within the district of the office being sought. Petition forms will be available from the Registrar of Voters office on the day following the Party's endorsements, per the election calendar previously listed.
2. All signatures must be submitted to the Registrar of Voters office for verification by the indicated deadline. If the required signatures are obtained and verified, the petition will be certified by the Town Clerk and a primary will be held on **September 9, 2025**.
3. The winner of the primary will become the Democratic endorsed candidate and will be listed on the Democratic line of the ballot for the **November 4, 2025** general election.
  - For additional information, please visit: [SOTS Nominating & Primary Petitions](#)

## EXPECTATIONS OF ENDORSED CANDIDATES

If a candidate receives the Democratic endorsement, the candidate will be placed on the Democratic line of the ballot and the SDCC will support their candidacy in the general election. SDCC support is a supplement to the candidate's own campaign efforts and will not act as a substitute. There will be expectations of the Democratic endorsed candidates, including:

- Supporting the values and beliefs of the Democratic Party
- Proper social media etiquette
- Participation in SDCC election events
- Attending coordinated campaign meetings
- Fundraising
- Engaging in field efforts, such as canvassing and phone banking (even if there is no opponent)
- Attending debates, town hall forums, and responding to inquiries from the media or other organizations

Below are all the municipal elected offices in Stamford, and those **bolded** are up for election in 2025.

<i>Municipal Office</i>	<i>Term (years)</i>	<i>Next Election</i>	<i>Party Endorsement</i>	<i>Number of Seats Up</i>	<i>Term Begins</i>	<i>Salary (approximate)</i>	<i>Total Seats</i>
<b>Mayor</b>	4	2025	July	1	Dec.	\$200,000	1 seat
<b>Board of Finance</b>	4	2025	July	3	Dec.	None	6 seats, 3* seats are elected every 2 years; max 4 Dem seats
<b>Board of Education</b>	3	2025	July	3	Dec.	None	9 seats, 3* seats are elected every year; max 6 Dem seats
<b>Board of Representatives</b>	4	2025	July	40	Dec.	None	40 seats, 20 districts, 2 reps/district
<b>Town clerk</b>	4	2025	July	1	Dec.	\$140,000	1 seat
Registrar of Voters	4	2028	July	0	Dec.	\$85,000	2 seats
<b>Constables</b>	4	2025	July	4	Dec.	Fees	7 seats, max 4 Dem seats

\*Due to the majority/minority rule, limitations could apply as to how many seats are available in any election year.

## OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

### **MAYOR**

The Mayor serves a four year term, and is eligible for an unlimited number of terms.

### **How to run:**

The Democratic party endorses a candidate for Mayor by a majority vote of the 40 member SDCC.

### **Duties:**

1. The Mayor is the chief executive officer of the city and responsible for the management and budgets of the following departments: police, fire, roads, sewers and other public works, building inspection, parks, recreation, law, human resources, parking services, fleet management, information technology and purchasing for such purposes.
2. The Mayor appoints department heads, presents the budget, and signs ordinances and resolutions.
3. The Mayor also focuses on special initiatives that directly impact our community such as education, climate, employment, infrastructure, public health and safety.

More information can be found here: [Office of the Mayor](#)

## **BOARD OF FINANCE (BOF)**

The Board of Finance is composed of six members, each of whom hold office for a four-year term, and can be re-elected for an unlimited number of terms. One half of the seats are up for election at each biennial (odd year) municipal election.

### **How to run:**

The SDCC endorses up to three candidates for three open seats per election cycle by a majority vote of its 40 members. The three endorsed candidates can choose to run as a slate or as individuals. The three individuals who receive the highest number of votes are elected to the six-member board. However, the city charter dictates no party may hold more than four seats on the board. As such, if there are five candidates of the same party on the board then the candidate with the highest number of votes from any other party is seated instead.

### **Duties:**

1. The BOF is responsible for the oversight and administration of the city's financial affairs.
2. The BOF prepares and oversees the city's budget, subject to final approval by the BOR, and sets the tax rate. The BOF acts on interim appropriation requests, transfers, and allotments during the budget year and makes other financial decisions.

The Board of Finance holds regular meetings on the second Thursday of each month at 7:00 pm. Meetings are open to the public and held in the Board of Finance Meeting Room on the 4th Floor of the Stamford Government Center (or via Zoom).

More information can be found here: [Board of Finance](#)



## **BOARD OF EDUCATION (BOE)**

The Board of Education is composed of nine members, each of whom hold office for a three-year term, and can be re-elected for an unlimited number of terms. A total of 3 seats are up for election each year.

### **How to Run:**

The SDCC endorses up to three candidates for three open seats per election cycle by a majority vote of its 40 members. The three endorsed candidates can choose to run as a slate or as individuals. The three individuals who receive the highest number of votes are elected to the nine-member board. However, the city charter dictates no party may hold more than six seats on the board. As such, if there are six candidates of the same party on the board then the candidate with the highest number of votes from any other party is seated instead.

### **Duties**

1. The BOE is the policy making body of the school district, deriving its power, authority, roles and responsibilities from the Statutes of the State of Connecticut.
2. In general, the BOE has the power and duty to maintain and improve the City's public elementary and secondary schools, implement the educational objectives of the state, and provide other educational activities which, in its judgment, will best serve the interests of the school district.
3. The BOE is responsible for hiring and supervising the Superintendent of Schools, creating school district policies, and reviewing and voting on the Superintendent's annual budget proposal for the operation of the city's schools.
4. The BOE negotiates and approves contracts with the bargaining units that represent the employees of the Board of Education.

Regular monthly board meetings are held on the 4th Tuesday of each month at 7 pm. The BOE also has five working committees, each chaired by a BOE member. Committee meetings are generally held on the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Tuesday of each month. All meetings are open to the public, in the BOE board room on the 5th floor of the Stamford Government Center (or via Zoom).

More information can be found here: [Board of Education](#)

## **BOARD OF REPRESENTATIVES (BOR)**

The Board of Representatives is composed of 40 elected officials. There are twenty districts, each electing two representatives every four years (concurrent with the mayor's term) and can be re-elected for an unlimited number of terms.

### **How to Run**

Candidates are nominated and endorsed by the **two** SDCC members from the respective municipal district. If there is no endorsement of a candidate or a candidate fails to receive the endorsement of the two members, a petition to primary (or to fill the vacant ballot line) may be obtained from the Registrar of Voters office after the endorsement meeting date.

### **Duties:**

1. Enact ordinances for the government of the city, for the preservation of good order, peace and health, for the welfare and safety of its inhabitants and the protection and security of their property.
2. Adopt the submitted capital and operating budgets of the City and the Board of Education.
3. Approve submitted supplemental capital and operating budget requests.
4. Fill vacancies in elected offices (Mayor, Town Clerk, Board of Finance, Board of Education, Board of Representatives, and Constables); Approve the appointment of City Directors, the Director of Health, the Police Chief and the Fire and Rescue Chief; Approve appointments submitted by the mayor of members to boards, authorities and commissions.
5. Establish fees charged by the City.
6. Approve all City personnel contracts; Vote on negotiated and/or arbitrated labor contracts.
7. Approve large/multi-year contracts obtained as negotiated proposals.
8. Approve leases, sales, and purchases of City owned property.
9. The Board does not have the power to initiate, restore, reallocate or otherwise increase either capital or operating spending proposals.
10. Perform constituent serve as needed.

### **BOR Committees:**

The BOR operates on a committee system. All agenda items are assigned to one of the Board's 13 standing committees: Steering, Appointments, Fiscal, Personnel, Land Use/Urban Redevelopment, Operations, Public Safety and Health, Legislative and Rules, Parks and Recreation, Education, Housing/Social Services, State and Commerce, Transportation. Each BOR member is assigned by the Board President to at least one committee.

The full Board meets regularly the first Monday of every month at 8 PM on the 4th Floor of the Stamford Government Center in the Legislative Chamber (and hybrid via Zoom). Board committees typically meet on weekday evenings during the remainder of the month. All meetings are open to the public.

More information can be found here: [Board of Representatives](#)

## OTHER MUNICIPAL OFFICES

### TOWN CLERK

**How to run:**

The Democratic party endorses a candidate for Town Clerk to a four-year term by a majority vote of the 40 member SDCC.

**Duties:**

Town clerk is a public information officer who serves as liaison between local government and the public. They are responsible for (1) public records, (2) vital statistics, and (3) licensing. They have certain duties in connection with elections such as administering Absentee Ballots and emergency voting.

More information can be found here: [Town Clerk](#)

### REGISTRAR OF VOTERS

**How to run:**

The Democratic party endorses a candidate for Registrar of Voters to a four-year term by a majority vote of the 40 member SDCC.

**Duties:**

The Registrar of Voters are responsible for creating and maintaining the official registry list for the municipality, maintaining and preparing the voting machines, hiring and appointing poll workers, training poll workers, ensuring proper set-up of the polling place, ensuring proper reporting of candidate totals on election night, and conducting post-election recounts and audits. Although elected to represent different parties, the Registrars of Voters are jointly responsible for the conduct of elections and are expected to work together in a non-partisan manner.

More information can be found here: [Registrar of Voters](#)

### CONSTABLE

**How to run:**

The SDCC endorses up to four candidates for seven Constable seats to a four-year term by a majority vote of the 40 member SDCC. The four endorsed candidates can choose to run as a slate or as individuals. The candidates receiving the highest number of votes will be elected.

**Duties:**

Constables serve various legal papers.

More information can be found here: [Constable](#)

## CAMPAIGNING

While Stamford voter turnout reached 74% in the 2024 presidential election year, only about 30-40% of Stamford's registered voters cast their ballots in the last municipal elections. This difference in turnout exists even though municipal offices impact the local community most directly.

The act of campaigning is the opportunity to: a) introduce a candidate to the district represented, b) highlight the issues platform and reason for running, and c) motivate and encourage the participation of the voters in that district. An effective plan and proper fundraising are keys to a winning campaign.

## HOW TO SET UP A CAMPAIGN

1. File the SEEC Forms for candidacy and fundraising
2. Select a Treasurer if you are running as an individual. If running as a slate, you need a Treasurer and a Chairperson. Per State statute the Treasurer is responsible for approval and expenditure of all funds. Make sure to select someone detailed and reliable. More information can be found here: [Treasurer](#)
3. Obtain an EIN number (see IRS website)
4. Open a bank account
5. Set up an Anedot (or other portal account) to collect online contributions if you will be fundraising
6. Select a campaign manager and volunteer team
7. Create a campaign platform and communications plan
8. Seek voter information through the Registrar of Voters and/or VAN database

Refer to the State Elections Enforcement Commission (SEEC) website for more details: [SEEC Guidebook](#)

*Note: The Citizen's Election Program is only available for statewide offices and the general assembly.*

# HOW TO FUNDRAISE

Below is a general list of steps to take when putting together a plan for fundraising:

## Determine Your Budget

- How much do you need to spend (raise to win)?
- Find out how much has been spent on this type of race before.
- Are there contribution limits? (minimum and maximum thresholds)

## Develop a List of Potential Donors

- Who can you contact to donate to you?
- Who will help you raise money?
  - Friends and family (old and new, connections from various life stages)
  - Colleagues
  - Neighbors
  - Previous donors
  - Stakeholders/influencers, organizations, PACs, labor unions (abiding by campaign finance rules)
  - Cold prospects

## Make Your Appeal

- Identify your goal and message
- Develop your communications (email, calls, letters)
- Set a specific amount (ask for the most you can get, tailored to each potential donor)
- Ask directly and more than once

## Set a Timeline

- Have a set goal for when you want to raise the necessary funds

## Methods

- Use a variety of methods to reach potential donors:
  - Phone calls
  - In person meetings
  - Social media
  - Letters/emails/texts
  - Events

## SAMPLE CAMPAIGN BUDGET

Below is a comprehensive list of expenses to consider when running a campaign. Not all areas will apply depending on the level of the race being run.

### Expenses:

- VAN access (voter database)
- Website (host fee and development)
- Direct mail program
- Lawn signs
- Palm cards
- Paid social media/digital ads
- Texting platform
- Automated calls
- Paid field (canvassing)
- Postcards & postage
- Meet and greets/community meetings
- Fundraising/other events
- Print ads
- Photography and digital production
- Graphic artist fees
- Misc. expenses (printing, food, office supplies, postage, swag, bank fees, childcare, gas)
- Paid campaign staff (major campaigns)
- Office space

BOR district wide average campaign expense estimate: \$6,000-\$10,000

BOE, BOF city wide campaign estimate: \$10,000-\$25,000+

## **RUNNING A WINNING CAMPAIGN**

The key to running a winning campaign is getting in front of the voters, identifying your supporters, and making sure they get out to vote.

Social media, mailers and texts are important, but nothing is as effective as actually speaking to voters and persuading them to vote for you.

This means that YOU, as the candidate, need to knock on doors and make phone calls to reach as many voters as possible.

And you need to do it more than once. The first time to identify them as supporters and the second time to remind them to vote. Volunteers can certainly help, but the bulk of the outreach should be from you.

As you make the decision to run, it is important to consider whether you can make the time commitment necessary to win.

## RESOURCES

### **The Stamford Democratic City Committee**

<https://stamforddems.com/>

Email: [info@stamforddems.com](mailto:info@stamforddems.com)

Phone: 203-914-1144

### **CT State Elections Enforcement Commission (SEEC)**

[www.ct.gov/seec](http://www.ct.gov/seec)

Email: [seec@ct.gov](mailto:seec@ct.gov)

Candidate Services: 860-256-2985 Compliance: 860-256-2925

[SEEC Municipal Candidate Guidebook](#)

### **SEEC Treasurer's Corner**

[SEEC Treasurer Corner](#)

### **CT Secretary of State Election Calendar**

[SOTS Municipal Election Calendar](#)

### **Stamford Town Clerk**

<https://www.stamfordct.gov/government/town-clerk>

Email: [townclerk@stamfordct.gov](mailto:townclerk@stamfordct.gov)

### **Stamford Registrar of Voters**

<https://www.stamfordct.gov/government/registrar-of-voters>

Phone: 203-977-4011

### **CT Democratic Party and Platform**

<https://ctdems.org/>

<https://ctdems.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/2022-CT-Democratic-Party-Platform.pdf>

<https://democrats.org/where-we-stand/party-platform/>

## TRAINING

**CT State Democrats** <https://www.mobilize.us/ctdems/>

**National Democratic Training Committee** <https://traindemocrats.org/>

**Emerge Connecticut** <https://ct.emergeamerica.org/about/about-us/>

**The Campaign School at Yale** <https://www.tcsyale.org/>

**Connecticut Conference of Municipalities** <https://www.ccm-ct.org/Programs/Representation-Matters-Two-Day-Training>