



City Council Candidate Frequently Asked Questions

*Note this document is intended for informational purposes only. Please check the Foster City Candidate Guide and the San Mateo Candidate Guide for more detailed information. This FAQ is not legal advice, nor is it intended to be a substitute for the actual regulation, statute or law cited and is provided with the understanding that the City of Foster City is not rendering legal advice in making this FAQ available.

1. What are the qualifications to be a candidate for City Council?

Any member of the public who is not disqualified by the Constitution or laws of the State from holding a civil office and meets the requirements below may run for public office in the City of Foster City

- Be at least eighteen years of age
- Be a citizen of the United States and a resident of the State of California and City of Foster City
- Be a registered voter of the City of Foster City

2. When is the election and how many positions are open?

General Municipal Elections to elect council members in Foster City are held on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November of each even-numbered year. There are 5 members of the City Council. The number of open positions is dependent on how many terms are expiring – for example, in November 2024, there will be three open positions. In November 2026, there will be two open positions.

3. What Campaign Disclosure Forms are needed?

The State of California Political Reform Act of 1974 requires all candidates to file campaign disclosure statements disclosing contributions received and expenditures made.

Below is a summary of required forms (note this is not an exhaustive list):

From	Purpose
Form 700	Statement of Economic Interests must be filed when submitting the Nomination Paper
Form 501-Candidate Intention Statement	Must be filed before you solicit or receive any contributions or before making expenditures of personal funds on behalf of your candidacy. File an original with the City Clerk.
Form 410 — Statement of Organization	Used when organizing a campaign committee and must be filed within 10 days of receiving \$2,000 in

	contributions. Once you have submitted your Form 410 to the Secretary of State (SOS), you can visit their website to find your committee ID number. Enter the name of your committee in the search bar of the Cal-Access database .
Form 460 — Consolidated Campaign Statement	Used by candidates who have a controlled committee, or who have raised or spent or will raise or spend \$2,000 or more during a calendar year.
Form 470 — Candidate and Officeholder Campaign Statement (Short Form)	Used by candidates who do not have a controlled committee and do not anticipate receiving contributions or making expenditures totaling \$2,000 or more in a calendar year.
Form 497 — 24-hour Contribution Report	Any committee that makes or receives contribution(s) totaling in the aggregate of \$1,000 or more from a single source during the 90 days immediately prior to the election in which the candidate or measure is to be voted must file a report within 24 hours of the time the contribution was made or received.

Forms and deadlines will be reviewed with prospective candidates during the Candidate Filing appointment.

- Please see the [Information for Local Candidates, Superior Court Judges, Their Controlled Committees, and Primarily Formed Committees for Local Candidates](#) and the [FPPC Getting Started page](#) and [Frequently Asked Questions](#) for additional information.
- Check the [FPPC Filing Schedule for deadlines](#) (see the Candidates and Controlled Committees for Local Office schedule for the respective election).

The City of Foster City requires electronic filing of campaign statements. Contact the City Clerk’s Office to open a NetFile electronic campaign filing account to file campaign statements electronically.

4. When is the nomination period?

The nomination period – the time frame when people can file the Nomination Paper (discussed below) – starts 113 days prior to an election and ends 88 days prior to an election. (*Elections Code § 10407*) The specific dates will be posted on the City’s website in early July of an election year, but the dates generally fall from mid-July to early-August. If an eligible incumbent does not file by the deadline, the nomination period may be extended by five (5) days (*Elections Code §§ 10407 and 10225*).

5. What is a “Nomination Paper” and how many signatures are required?

The Nomination Paper is a document which must be signed by registered voters so that a person may qualify as a candidate. (*Elections Code §§ 10221-10228*). A candidate may serve as a circulator of their own Nomination Paper. Candidates may also sign their own Paper, and the signature will be given the same effect as that of any other qualified signer.

The number of signatures needed for nomination of a candidate depends on the number of registered voters in the city. No voter may sign more than one Nomination Paper for the same office and each council position is a separate office. The signatures are verified by the San Mateo County Elections Office. Generally, at least 20 signatures must be verified for the candidate to be a qualified candidate but the specific number of required signatures will need to be confirmed with the City Clerk prior to each election.

6. What other paperwork is needed for candidacy?

In addition to the Nomination Paper, prospective candidates generally complete several forms to provide information that will be used on the official ballot. Candidates may also provide a Candidate Statement of not more than 200 words for publication in the Voter Information Guide. If a candidate chooses to provide a Candidate Statement, they must cover the cost of translation and publication and provide a deposit (\$900). (*Elections Code § 13307*).

Generally, prospective candidates complete a Candidate Registration Form to provide basic information and make an appointment with the Communications Director/City Clerk to receive certain forms. At the appointment, the following forms are reviewed and issued to prospective candidates (note these forms are subject to change based on information provided by the County):

- **Nomination Paper** (detailed above)
- **Declaration of Candidacy** - The candidate’s name as provided by the candidate on the Declaration of Candidacy is the way it will appear on the ballot.
- **Ballot Designation Worksheet** - The ballot designation is the word, or group of not more than three (3) words, which will appear on the ballot under the candidate's name, designating the current principal profession, vocation, or occupation of the candidate.
- **Permission to Post Personal Information on the Internet Form** – Candidate may indicate which information may be posted on the internet
- **Candidate Statement of Qualifications Form** - This form should be completed even if a candidate chooses not to submit a candidate statement.
 - Each candidate for the office of Member of the City Council may prepare a candidate's statement to acquaint voters with a candidate's qualifications for office.

- This statement is incorporated into the Voter Information Guide and will be mailed to all registered voters in the City.
- The statement must be 200 words or less of the candidate's education and qualifications
- A deposit of \$900.00 is needed to cover the cost of publication and translation of a candidate's statement. Any unused funds will be refunded back to the candidate. Similarly, any overage of cost will be invoiced to the candidate.
- **Character-Based Name Form** – Candidates should provide their character-based names on the Character-Based Name Form, along with supporting documents. Candidates without character-based names will automatically be given a phonetic transliteration of their names in Chinese.
- FPPC forms detailed above:
 - Form 700 — Statement of Economic Interests
 - Form 501— Candidate Intention Statement*
 - Form 410 — Statement of Organization
 - Form 460 — Consolidated Campaign Statement
 - Form 470 — Candidate and Officeholder Campaign Statement (Short Form)
 - Form 497 — 24-hour Contribution Report

*Must be a wet signature copy filed with the City Clerk's Office

7. Are there contribution limits?

Effective January 1, 2021 State limits apply to cities that do not have established limits. The City of Foster City does not currently have adopted campaign contribution limits so the City defaults to those adopted by the State for city and county candidates. Contribution limits can be found in Title 2, Division 6 of the California Code of Regulations section 18545(a) and on the Fair Political Practices Commission's ("FPPC") website at <https://www.fppc.ca.gov/the-law/fppc-regulations/regulations-index.html>. The default limit for contributions to city and county candidates subject to AB 571 from January 1, 2023 through December 31, 2024 is set at \$5,500 per election. The contribution limit is updated biennially for inflation.

8. What are the regulations for signs used for your candidacy?

Candidates that plan to utilize signs should review Chapter 15.12 of the Foster City Municipal Code found at <https://www.codepublishing.com/CA/FosterCity/> to understand what signs are permitted and the associated permit process and what signs are prohibited.

9. What training or seminars are available?

San Mateo County conducts candidate seminars, typically at the beginning of the nomination period. Visit the [San Mateo County Elections website](#) for dates and additional information.

After the end of the nomination period, the City holds a Candidate Orientation for qualified candidates. After the certification of the election, newly elected Councilmembers are invited to attend a Councilmember Orientation, and additional training opportunities are also available.