

FORMING A NEW POLITICAL PARTY

[ACA §§7-1-101, 7-3-108, 7-7-205]

- A group desiring to form a new political party shall file a petition with the Secretary of State containing signatures of at least ten thousand (10,000) registered voters in the state.
- The petition shall declare the intent of organizing a political party, the name of which shall be stated in the declaration.
NOTE: No political party or group shall assume a name or designation that is so similar, in the opinion of the Secretary of State, to that of an existing political party as to confuse or mislead the voters at an election.
- A new political party that wishes to select nominees for the next general election shall file a sufficient petition no later than forty-five (45) days before the preferential primary election.
- The Secretary of State shall determine the sufficiency of the signatures submitted within thirty (30) days of filing.
- A signature shall not be counted if the date of the signature does not appear on the petition.
- Any signature that is dated more than ninety (90) days before the date of the petition is submitted shall not be counted.
- If the petition is determined to be insufficient, the Secretary of State shall notify the sponsors in writing, through their designated agent, and shall set forth the reason for so finding.
- Upon certification of sufficiency of the petition by the Secretary of State, a new political party shall be declared by the Secretary of State.
- A new political party formed by the petition process shall nominate candidates by convention for the first general election after certification.
NOTE: If the new party maintains party status by obtaining three percent (3%) of the total vote cast for the Office of Governor or nominees for presidential electors (whichever is less) at the first general election after certification, the new political party shall nominate candidates in the party primary as set forth in Ark. Code Ann. §7-7-101 et seq.
- A candidate nominated by convention shall file a political practices pledge with the Secretary of State or the county clerk, as the case may be, no later than noon of the date of the preferential primary election.

For a newly formed political party to participate in the November 6, 2012, General Election, its petition must be filed by April 7, 2012. Because this deadline falls on a Saturday, the petition must be filed by Monday, April 9, 2012.

A newly organized political party shall not be recognized, qualified to participate, or permitted to have the names of its candidates printed on the ballot until an affidavit, by the officers of the party in this state under oath, is filed with the Secretary of State stating that it does not directly or indirectly carry on, advocate, teach, justify, aid, or abet an act of terrorism as defined by Ark. Code Ann. §5-54-205, a program of sabotage, force, and violence, sedition, treason against or the overthrow of the government of the United States or this state by force, violence or by an unlawful means.