

## **CHAMPAIGN COUNTY, OHIO APPLICANTS FOR NOTARY PUBLIC COMMISSIONS** **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

*\*\*\* The following questions apply to non-Attorney applicants who are seeking appointment and commission as Notaries Public in Champaign County, Ohio*

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1. What are the requirements to hold the office of Notary Public in Champaign County, Ohio?
  - a. The individual seeking appointment and commission as a Notary Public (hereinafter "Applicant") must complete an application, under oath, that states:
    - i. The Applicant is at least 18 years of age;
    - ii. The Applicant is of good moral character; and
    - iii. The Applicant is a resident of Champaign County, Ohio.
  - b. The Court must determine that the Applicant possesses "sufficient qualifications and ability to discharge the duties of the office of notary public." [R.C. 147.02\(A\)\(3\)](#)

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2. How does the Court determine that an Applicant possesses “sufficient qualifications and ability to discharge the duties of the office of notary public”?
  - a. The Applicant must have two (2) individuals submit character reference letter recommendations on a form provided by the Court;
  - b. The Applicant must pass a written examination that tests their knowledge of the duties and responsibilities of a notary public.

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3. Where do I get the Application to become a Notary Public or renew my Notary Public Commission?
  - a. The Applicant may access the Court’s website, [www.champaigncourt.org](http://www.champaigncourt.org) and download the Application.
  - b. The Applicant may obtain a copy of the Application in person at Court offices located at the Champaign County Courthouse, 200 North Main Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Urbana, Ohio 43078, Monday – Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

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4. What, when, where and what time is the written examination?
  - a. The written examination is a multiple-choice test that takes place on the second and fourth Wednesdays of every month from 9:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. at Court offices located on the second floor of the Champaign County Courthouse, 200 North Main Street, Urbana, Ohio 43078.
  - b. Examinations shall begin promptly at 9:00 a.m. and shall end promptly at 10:00 a.m. Applicants will not be permitted to be seated for the examination after 8:55 a.m.
  - c. The Applicant will need to bring a government issued photo identification card with them to the written examination.

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5. How do I schedule a time to take the written examination?

- a. In order to schedule the written examination, the Applicant must first submit a completed Application to the Court, make full payment of the application fees and produce proof of identity through a valid, government-issued photo identification card.
- b. Once the completed Application and payment of fees are **submitted and accepted** by the Court, the Applicant may schedule the written examination by:
  - i. Appearing in person at Court offices located at the Champaign County Courthouse, 200 North Main Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Urbana, Ohio 43078, Monday – Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. or
  - ii. Telephone Court Staff at (937) 484 – 1000, Monday – Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

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6. How much does it cost to complete the application process?

- a. To seek an appointment and commission as a Notary Public for the first time:
  - i. The Applicant shall submit a \$20.00 fee (check or money order) to the Champaign County Common Pleas Court at the time of scheduling the written examination.
  - ii. The Applicant shall submit a \$15.00 fee (check or money order) to the Ohio Secretary of State at the time of scheduling the written examination.
  - iii. If a re-test is required due to failure to pass the written examination, the Applicant shall submit an additional \$10.00 fee (check or money order) for each re-test to the Champaign County Common Pleas Court at the time of scheduling the re-test.
  - iv. Upon successfully obtaining the certification from the Court for the appointment and commission as a Notary Public, the Applicant shall record the Commission with the Champaign County Clerk of Courts and submit a recording fee designated by the Clerk.

- b. To obtain a renewal of a Notary Public Commission:
  - i. The Applicant shall submit a \$20.00 fee (check or money order) to the Champaign County Common Pleas Court at the time of scheduling the written examination.
  - ii. The Applicant shall submit a \$15.00 fee (check or money order) to the Ohio Secretary of State at the time of scheduling the written examination.
  - iii. If a re-test is required due to failure to pass the written examination, the Applicant shall submit an additional \$10.00 fee (check or money order) for each re-test to the Champaign County Common Pleas Court at the time of scheduling the re-test.
  - iv. Upon successfully obtaining the certification from the Court for the appointment and commission as a Notary Public, the Applicant shall record the Commission with the Champaign County Clerk of Courts and submit a recording fee designated by the Clerk.

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## 7. Why do I have to take a written examination?

- a. Through the written examination process, the Court will gain an objective measure for determining that all notaries public residing in Champaign County possess basic general knowledge of their duties and responsibilities under Ohio law.

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## 8. I have held a Notary Public commission for a number of years and believe that I understand my responsibilities. Do I still have to take a written examination?

- a. Yes, anyone who is currently commissioned as a Notary Public will be required to take a written examination at the time they are seeking to renew their commission.
- b. Judge Selvaggio requires applicants for renewal of their notary commission to re-take the written examination in order to ensure that

Applicants are updated on any changes in notarial state law that were passed by the Ohio General Assembly since the time of obtaining their last commission.

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9. How soon can I seek to renew my Notary Public Commission?

- a. Through its Local Rules of Practice and Procedure, the Court authorizes a person who has been commissioned as a Notary Public to seek renewal of the commission within sixty (60) days of the expiration of their commission.
- b. For good cause shown, and through submission of a written request, the Court may permit the Notary Public to seek renewal earlier than the sixty (60) day time period.

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10. Will I have to take a written examination every time I seek renewal of my commission?

- a. Yes, every time a renewal of a commission is sought, the Applicant must have two (2) individuals submit character reference letter recommendations on a form provided by the Court and successfully pass a written examination testing basic knowledge of notarial duties and responsibilities.
- b. Judge Selvaggio requires applicants for renewal of their notary commission to re-take the written examination in order to ensure that Applicants are updated on any changes in notarial state law that were passed by the Ohio General Assembly since the time of obtaining their last commission.

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11. Will the Court provide me a study guide for the written examination?

- a. Yes, the Court will provide a complimentary Notary Public Handbook that will not only serve as a study guide for the written examination, but will

also serve as a reference resource for the Notary Public during his or her term of office.

- b. The Notary Public Handbook may be obtained as follows:
  - i. The Applicant may access the Court's website, [www.champaigncourt.org](http://www.champaigncourt.org), and download the Notary Public Handbook, or
  - ii. The Applicant may appear in person at the Champaign County Common Pleas Court, General Division, located at the Champaign County Courthouse, 200 North Main Street, Second Floor, Urbana, Ohio 43078, Monday – Friday, between the hours of 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

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## 12. How will I know what to study?

- a. The Court has developed a written examination that is designed to test your basic understanding of the fundamentals associated with the legal duties and lawful responsibilities of the notary public.
- b. Although you should be aware of the materials contained in the Appendix section of the Notary Public Handbook (i.e., the sample forms, Ohio statutes and Champaign County Local Rules of Practice and Procedure), you will not be tested on the specific content contained in those materials. Instead, **the written examination questions were developed from the information found on pages 5 – 23 of the Notary Public Handbook.**

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## 13. Am I permitted to refer to my Notary Public Handbook during the written examination?

- a. No. At this time, and consistent with most counties, the Court does not permit an Applicant to bring the Notary Public Handbook into the examination room.

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14. What is required to successfully pass the written examination?

- a. The written examination consists of twenty (20) questions. To pass the examination, the Applicant must achieve BOTH of the following:
  - i. Of the twenty (20) questions asked, four (4) questions will be specially marked questions that are in **bold print** and marked with asterisks (\*\*\*) beside them. You must answer all four of those specially marked questions correctly; and
  - ii. Of the remaining sixteen (16) questions, you must answer at least 75% of the remaining questions correctly (i.e., 12 of the 16 questions).

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15. What happens if I do not pass the written examination?

- a. The Applicant may seek to take another written examination three additional times per submitted Application, at 30 days, 60 days and one year from the date of the last unsuccessful examination, respectively.
- b. A fee of \$10.00 (check or money order) must be paid to the Champaign County Common Pleas Court prior to scheduling any re-examination.

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16. Can the Court deny my application for other grounds than not passing the written examination?

- a. Yes, the Court can deny the application for several reasons, including:
  - i. The Applicant's application is incomplete or improperly filled out;
  - ii. The Applicant's criminal, civil or traffic history record causes the Court to conclude that the Applicant is not of good moral character;
  - iii. The Applicant's character references fail to provide the Court with the necessary affirmation that the Applicant is of good moral character and possesses the qualifications to be a good Notary Public.

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17. Is my money refunded if I do not pass the written examination or if the Court denies my application for other reasons?

- a. The Court will not refund the \$20.00 Application / written examination fee or the \$10.00 re-examination fee for denial of an application;
- b. The Court will refund the \$15.00 Ohio Secretary of State fee for denial of an application, as the Court will not forward that fee to the Ohio Secretary of State until the Court actually grants the application and issues a Certificate of Qualification to the Applicant.

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18. What is contained in the Certificate of Qualification?

- a. If the Court grants the application, the Certificate of Qualification issued by the Court indicates that:
  - i. The Applicant passed a written examination for the Office of Notary Public that tested knowledge and understanding of the duties pertaining to the Notary Public;
  - ii. The Applicant is of good moral character;
  - iii. The Applicant is a resident of Champaign County, Ohio;
  - iv. The Applicant possesses sufficient qualifications and abilities to discharge the duties of the office of Notary Public; and
  - v. Whether the Applicant is an attorney at law qualified to practice in Ohio.

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19. I have my commission as a Notary Public. How do I change my name or address and how much does it cost?

- a. A Notary Public needing to make a change of name and/or address may obtain the necessary forms as follows:
  - i. The Applicant may access the Court's website, [www.champaigncourt.org](http://www.champaigncourt.org), to obtain a copy of the change of name/address form.

- ii. The Applicant may access the Ohio Secretary of State's website, <http://www.sos.state.oh.us/sos/recordsIndexes/Notary/info.aspx>, to obtain a copy of the change of name/address form.
    - iii. The Applicant may receive a copy of the application in person at Court offices located at the Champaign County Courthouse, 200 North Main Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Urbana, Ohio 43078, Monday – Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.
  - b. Change of name and/or address forms are to be submitted to Court Staff or the Ohio Secretary of State's Office with a fee of \$2.00 (check or money order made payable to the Ohio Secretary of State).

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## 20. Can a Notary Public be removed from office?

- a. Yes, a Notary Public may be removed from office for any reason set forth in:
  - i. [Ohio Revised Code Section 147.10](#) ("Notary Public Acting After Commission Expires");
  - ii. [Ohio Revised Code Section 147.13](#) ("Removal for Receiving Excess Fees / Dishonestly or Unfaithfully Discharging Official Duties"); and,
  - iii. [Ohio Revised Code Section 147.14](#) ("Removal From Office for Certifying Affidavit Without Administering Oath").

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## 21. What is the process for removing a Notary Public from office?

- a. Consistent with [Ohio Revised Code Section 147.13](#), a Notary Public may be removed from office by the Court upon complaint filed and substantiated in the Court.

- i. Any removal complaint shall be filed with the Clerk in the miscellaneous docket, captioned “In Re: Removal of Notary Public [Name of the Notary Public Officer].”
- ii. Said complaint shall be heard and determined by the Court after notice of the hearing is provided to the individual or individuals against whom the complaint is filed.

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22. Are there local rules of court that govern the process for certifying Champaign County residents seeking appointment to the Office of Notary Public?

- a. Yes, the Champaign County Court of Common Pleas, General Division has enacted local rules of court that govern the process it will use to certify qualifications of Champaign County residents applying to the Court for appointment to the Office of Notary Public.
- b. The local rules of court, known as the Local Rules of Practice and Procedure for the Champaign County Court of Common Pleas, General Division, can be accessed by visiting the Court’s website, [www.champaigncourt.org](http://www.champaigncourt.org) and searching for the local rules Champaign G.D.L.R. 8.1 – Champaign G.D.L.R. 8.10.

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