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DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA BOARD OF ELECTIONS AND ETHICS

**Information Circular
on Advisory Neighborhood Commissions**

What is an ANC?

Called "...a unique experiment in neighborhood democracy" by the League of Women Voters, ANC's were established by the Home Rule Charter in 1973 and approved by voters in the May 7, 1974 Charter Referendum Election. **ANC's function as citizen advisory boards, which represent the citizens of a particular neighborhood area.** Their role, as defined by the D.C. Election Code, includes advising the District government,

"...on matters of public policy including decisions regarding planning, streets, recreation, social services programs, health, safety, and sanitation in that neighborhood commission area." (D.C. Code, Section 1-251(c)(1)).

The law also states that recommendations made by the ANC " ... shall be given great weight" (D.C. Code, Section 1-261(d)) by government agencies as they deliberate on matters that affect the residents of the ANC area.

ANC Commissioners serve two-year terms as unsalaried, nonpartisan officials elected by voters to represent their neighborhood areas. The structure of these neighborhood areas is discussed below.

Structure of the ANC's

The District's **299 Single Member Districts (SMD's)** are smaller geographical and political units within the city's 37 Advisory Neighborhood Commissions. Each SMD contains approximately 2,000 residents and elects one Commissioner to serve on the area's Advisory Neighborhood Commission.

In most cases, the ANC's exist within ward boundaries, and each ANC is numbered to identify the ward where it is located.* For example, ANC's 4A, 4B, 4C, and 4D lie within Ward 4. The SMD's within each ANC are numbered consecutively. For example, SMD's 4AO1, 4AO2, 4AO3, 4AO4, 4AO5, 4AO6, 4AO7, and 4AO8 comprise ANC 4A. Candidates running for a seat on the ANC are elected by the registered voters of the SMD in which the candidate resides.

*Only ANC Single Member District 3C01 crosses ward lines, due to adjustments in ward boundaries following the 1980 census.

How to Become an ANC Candidate

To appear on the ballot -- either in a scheduled general election or in a special election to fill a vacancy -- an ANC candidate must submit a nominating petition with the signatures of 25 registered voters to the D.C. Board of Elections. Voters signing the petition must reside within that ANC Single Member District. Petitions are available through the Board of Elections, at 441 4th Street NW, Room 250. Check the calendar for each election to find out the dates that petitions are available.

All ANC candidates must be registered voters and residents of the Single Member District from which they are elected. In addition, they must have resided in the SMD for at least 60 days before the date on which the nominating petition is filed.

All ANC petition forms are posted for public inspection and possible challenge after they are filed. During the challenge period, any registered voter may challenge the validity of the signatures on the petition form. Check the calendar for each election for the exact dates of the challenge period.

Assistance for ANC Candidates

The Board offers special services to assist ANC candidates, including a brief conference with a member of the Voter Services Staff to answer questions and to outline procedures for circulating and filing a nominating petition. During this conference, the candidate is given a listing of the registered voters in his or her SMD, a map of the ANC/SMD area, and other information materials.

ANC Voting Information

Because ANC's are nonpartisan offices, all registered voters--regardless of party affiliation--are eligible to vote for ANC candidates. The candidate receiving the highest number of votes (not necessarily a majority) in each ANC contest is declared the winner.

For more information about ANC elections, please call 727-2525.