



2023 Register of Wills Candidate Questionnaire

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Instructions

Please complete the following questions on this form and return by email to gmgilman@gmail.com. Note: Although these questions are uniform, we recognize that the perspective of the incumbent and challengers will differ based on whether your viewpoints arise from within or without the Office.

I. Background

1. Please describe your professional and educational history and how it prepares you for the position of Register of Wills.

I am a proud product of the Philadelphia Public School System and received my B.S. from Morris College in Sumter, SC. As the Compliance Solutions Lead at GlaxoSmithKline (GSK), I've gained experience and knowledge in standard systems, global compliance, and digital office management for some of the largest scientific labs in our city and across the world. In this role, I ensure that all documentation is completed accurately and work closely with local government offices and boards to file these documents correctly. I plan on bringing this experience and others to the Register of Wills office and assisting everyday Philadelphians file legal documents both with the City of Philadelphia and the State of Pennsylvania.

2. Why do you want to hold the Office of The Register of Wills & Clerk of Orphans' Court?
What skill set do you bring that qualify and make you stand out for this position?

I am passionate about public service and providing efficient and effective service to the people of my community and neighborhood; this is why I am running for the Office of Register of Wills & Clerk of Orphans' Court. I am a detail-oriented professional with a strong background in customer service, office management, and administrative support who will use these skills to make the office more accessible and helpful for everyone. My management experience has taught me how to efficiently supervise, set goals and priorities, and ensure that deadlines and goals are met. I also have excellent communication skills and am comfortable interacting with members of the public, attorneys, and other city and state officials. I am confident that my skills and experience make me an ideal candidate for the Office of the Register of Wills & Clerk of Orphans' Court.

3. How much money have you raised, and how much do you anticipate raising? What is your plan to win?

I anticipate raising \$75,000 and I believe I will need \$60,000 to win this office.

4. What endorsements have you obtained and what others do you expect?

I am proud to share that I have the support of the following persons and organizations, to name a few:

- Rev. James S. Hall, Jr & The Hall Family
- Rev. William Gipson
- Bishop J. Louis Felton
- NorthEast Ward Leader Group
- 5th Square Political Action Committee

II. General Duties of Office

5. Please briefly explain the mission of the Office of The Register of Wills & Clerk of Orphans' Court. To whom, or to what department, is this office accountable?

The mission of the Office of the Register of Wills & Clerk of Orphans' Court is to continually seek the best possible administrative solutions in these processes, and to provide the most compassionate experience for all those served. The ROW office is accountable for several things, including:

- Issuing marriage licenses and keeping marriage records dating back to 1915.
- Probate wills, which proves that they're valid.
- Issuing letters of administration when a Philadelphia resident dies without a will.
- Keeping records of wills, estate inventories, and related documents.

- Acting as an agent for filing and paying inheritance taxes.
- Maintaining the dockets and records of the Orphan's Court.

The Office of the Register of Wills Clerk of Orphans' Court is accountable to the residents of Philadelphia, state and city officials.

6. Why is The Register of Wills important?

The Register of Wills is an important and essential official in the probate process, providing oversight that includes but is not limited to verifying the validity of a will, distributing assets according to the will, and collecting and distributing any debts that may be owed by the estate. Administratively, the Office also tracks estates and refers delinquent matters to the Court for swift and timely resolutions. The ROW is additionally responsible for ensuring that the entirety of the probate process is conducted in an orderly and efficient manner and in compliance with all city and state laws and regulations. Outside of this, the ROW also maintains the goodwill and faith of the city's citizens by advising residents in the preparation of all necessary forms, and provides for the safekeeping of wills for living persons when requested in order to minimize complications later.

7. How does this office interact with and affect the citizens of Philadelphia? Has that interaction increased or decreased? Why or why not?

The Office of the Register of Wills touches the life of every Philadelphian in one way or another. It is an office that serves people when they are feeling their best (getting married) or their worst (the death of a loved one). The interactions of the office have increased with COVID-19 and the focus on tangled titles, and is not likely to decrease any time soon.

8. What is the annual budget, and what expenditure classes take up a good portion of it, whether salaries, programming, or other items?

The budget for the ROW office changes yearly and the budget for last year was \$4,551,645 with an increase of \$112,764, with class 100 as the largest expenditure. This funding will maintain the office's current 70 full-time positions in addition to the office's part-time, season, and temporary positions.

9. What are the staffing needs? Is there room for growth or changes in job numbers, skills, or requirements?

There are currently 70 full-time employees serving the 1.5 Million residents of Philadelphia. There is room for growth and changes to the job numbers, and I plan to grow the number of employees in order to staff satellite offices around Philadelphia,

making ROW more accessible to the people of Philadelphia and employing more Philadelphians.

10. Do you see a need for an increased budget to perform this work?

Yes, there will be an increase in budget, as additional staff will be hired.

11. How much revenue does your department generate annually? Are there departmental expenditures that aren't covered by City appropriations, and do they require you to find other ways to supplement your department? What, if any, other financial resources do you use to supplement expenditures for your department?

The ROW office is fully funded by the City of Philadelphia. The office generates approximately \$80 million annually, all of which is directed back to the state.

12. Would you support efforts to have your department revenues deposited into a Public Bank? Would that create any additional positive/negative actions on the part of your department?

The public banking model is one that has a great potential to do good. We have seen the impact of banks that were crafted to serve private sentiment over public interests, and we have also seen how important proper bank regulation is to the health of local, state, and even national economies. Under the public banking model, deposits made to the bank would be managed by the state, allowing the State of Pennsylvania to serve low-interest loans to Philadelphians as well as local businesses and other public agencies. I would support this because such a system allows for government oversight and regulation of banking systems to advance a mission that serves the public good and combat the crippling effects of an extended recession, giving city and state residents an alternative economic option to explore when they cannot access traditional banks and loans.

13. Are your department revenues going to the City of Philadelphia General Fund or some other place?

All revenue goes to the State of Pennsylvania.

14. Are you in support of the Wealth Tax and do you believe it would have any possible effects on the citizens going through probate and/or any additional work this office would have to perform?

I am in support of a wealth tax and believe that it would not affect the citizens going to probate because the taxes from probate are implemented by the state.

15. What type of programming and changes have been implemented over the past three years, and how successful have those changes been? How would you measure that success?

One of the programs that have been implemented over the past three years are educational classes about the work of the Office of Register of Wills. I would measure the success by the number of attendees. I would improve upon these classes by making them more accessible to the public, digitally accessible and by promoting them across social media platforms.

16. What additional programming and changes, would you like to implement that would benefit the public? (i.e., internships, technology, status of old records, documentation, archiving, storage, and historical preservation)

I would launch a preservation project to digitize all historical documents and make them accessible online to all citizens. Additionally, I would like to work with the library to build a system to maintain and share these documents.

17. How diverse is this office compared to three years ago?

The diversity numbers of the office have not changed substantially over the past 3 years.

18. There has been some controversy around office hiring practices that have folks questioning the incumbent's leadership ability. Please speak to that.

I cannot speak to the incumbent's hiring decision or practices, but I can speak to what will happen under my administration:

- The Register of Wills Office will be fully staffed with qualified people
- The Register of Wills Office will increase the number of staff people
- The Register of Wills Office will have transparency around hiring practices