



★ VIRGINIA ★  
DEPARTMENT *of* ELECTIONS

# How to Run for Local Office

Ballot Access Requirements for the  
**June 18, 2024 Primary** and  
the **November 5, 2024 General Elections**

## Definitions and Key Icons

**COMET** – Database for candidates to file, and the Department of Elections to track, campaign finance

**Independent candidate** – an individual who is seeking to run in a General Election without the nomination from the Republican or Democratic party (may include a recognized party or no party)

**Political party** – an organization that, at either of the two preceding statewide general elections, received at least 10 percent of the total vote cast for any statewide office filled in that election (currently only Democratic and Republican)

**Primary candidate** – an individual who is seeking the nomination of a political party by running in a primary

**Non-primary party candidate** – an individual who is seeking the nomination of a political party by a means other than a primary; speak with the party

**Incumbent** – an officeholder who wants to run for reelection to the same office

**Qualified voter** – a person who is entitled to vote under the Virginia Constitution and is properly registered to vote (see [definition here](#))

**Recognized political party** – An organization that meets the requirements set out in Va. Code [§ 24.2-613](#)

**Va. Code** – [Virginia Code](#)

**VAC** – [Virginia Administrative Code](#)

**Writ of election** – a legal document issued by a judge ordering an election

**ELECT** – The Virginia Department of Elections  
1100 Bank Street, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor  
Richmond, VA 23219



Notes where to find information in the Code of Virginia or Virginia Administrative Code.



Indicates beginning and/or ending deadlines for filing documents.



Indicates information on where to file documents.



Indicates additional information that may be helpful.

# How candidates get on the ballot in Virginia

**Follow these instructions if you are running for one of these local offices:**

**Local Offices**

Mayor (Cities and Towns)	Member, Town Council
Member, City Council	Soil and Water Conservation Director
Member, County Board of Supervisors	Town Recorder (Clerk)
Member, School Board (Cities and Counties)	Town Treasurer

**Constitutional Offices**

Commissioner of Revenue	Sheriff
Commonwealth’s Attorney	Treasurer
Clerk of Court	

**Follow these instructions to get on the ballot for local office in:**

- The Primary Election on Tuesday, June 18, 2024.
- The General Election on Tuesday, November 5, 2024.

## Election Calendar 2024

Type of Election	Candidates: Last Day to File
<b>Primary</b>	
Tuesday, June 18, 2024	Thursday, April 4, 2024 at 5:00 pm
Find in Code: Va. Code §§ <a href="#">24.2-503</a> , <a href="#">24.2-522</a> and <a href="#">24.2-524</a>	
<b>General</b>	
Tuesday, November 5, 2024	Tuesday, June 18, 2024 at 7:00 pm
Find in Code: Va. Code §§ <a href="#">24.2-503</a> and <a href="#">24.2-507</a>	

### Do you fulfill the basic qualifications to be a candidate?

[\(Virginia Code § 24.2-500\)](#)

- You have been a resident of Virginia for **one year** immediately preceding the election, November 5, 2024.
- You are a **resident** of the county, city, or town in which you are trying to run for office.
- You are **registered to vote** in the county, city, or town in which you are trying to run for office.

# What, when, and where do I file?

[This table is a summary. Find more information below.](#)

	What do I need to file?	Notes or other information	Where do I file this form?	When does filing open?	What is the deadline to file?
<b>1</b>	<a href="#">Certificate of Candidate Qualification - Local Offices</a>  §§ <a href="#">24.2-501</a> or <a href="#">24.2-503</a>		Your local <a href="#">General Registrar</a> .	Primary candidates:  Tuesday, January 2, 2024.	Thursday, April 4, 2024 at 5:00 pm
			Postmarked by deadline if sent registered or certified USPS mail.	Non-primary party and independent candidates:  Tuesday, January 2, 2024.	Tuesday, June 18, 2024 at 7:00 pm
<b>2</b>	<a href="#">Statement of Economic Interests – Local Offices</a>  §§ <a href="#">24.2-502</a> and <a href="#">24.2-503</a>	Only applies to certain candidates (review page 7 below).	Your local <a href="#">General Registrar</a> .	Primary candidates:  Tuesday, January 2, 2024.	Thursday, April 4, 2024 at 5:00 pm
			Postmarked by deadline if sent registered or certified USPS mail.	Non-primary party and independent candidates:  Tuesday, January 2, 2024.	Tuesday, June 18, 2024 at 7:00 pm
<b>3</b>	Primary Filing Fee  §§ <a href="#">24.2-523</a> and <a href="#">24.2-524</a>	Contact your local Treasurer or Director of Finance for fee amount.	The Treasurer or Director of Finance in the locality where you live.	Primary candidates:  Tuesday, January 2, 2024.	Thursday, April 4, 2024 at 5:00 pm  Non-primary party and independent candidates: You do not need to file.
<b>4a</b>	<a href="#">Declaration of Candidacy</a>  §§ <a href="#">24.2-505</a> , <a href="#">24.2-507</a> , <a href="#">24.2-520</a> , and <a href="#">24.2-522</a>	Submit with your Petitions of Qualified Voters (4c) and, if applicable, receipt for your primary filing fee (4b).	Primary candidates: The Chairman of your local political party.	Primary candidates:  Monday, March 18, 2024 at 12:00 pm	Thursday, April 4, 2024 at 5:00 pm
			All other candidates: Your local <a href="#">General Registrar</a> .	Independent candidates:  Tuesday, January 2, 2024.	Non-primary party candidates: You do not need to file.  Tuesday, June 18, 2024 at 7:00 pm

	What do I need to file?	Notes or other information	Where do I file this form?	When does filing open?	What is the deadline to file?
<b>4b</b>	<p>Receipt for Primary Filing Fee</p> <p>§§ <a href="#">24.2-523</a> and <a href="#">24.2-524</a></p>		The Chairman of your local political party.	<p>Primary candidates: Monday, March 18, 2024 at 12 pm</p> <hr/> <p>Non-primary party and independent candidates: you do not need to file.</p>	Thursday, April 4, 2024 at 5:00 pm
<b>4c</b>	<p><a href="#">Petitions of Qualified Voters</a></p> <p>§§ <a href="#">24.2-505(D)</a>, <a href="#">24.2-506</a>, <a href="#">24.2-507</a>, <a href="#">24.2-521</a>, and <a href="#">24.2-522</a></p> <p>Administrative Code <a href="#">1 VAC 20-50-20</a> and <a href="#">1 VAC 20-50-30</a></p>	Independent candidates do <b>not</b> need to submit all petition pages at once.	<p>Primary candidates: The Chairman of your local political party.</p> <p>All other candidates: Your local <a href="#">General Registrar</a>.</p>	<p>Primary candidates: Monday, March 18, 2024 at 12 pm</p> <hr/> <p>Non-primary party candidates: You do not need to file.</p> <hr/> <p>Independent candidates: Tuesday, January 2, 2024.</p>	Thursday, April 4, 2024 at 5:00 pm          Tuesday, June 18, 2024 at 7:00 pm
<b>5</b>	<p><a href="#">Statement of Organization for a Candidate</a></p> <p>§§ 24.2 <a href="#">Chapter 9.3</a></p> <p>§ <a href="#">24.2-947.1</a></p>		<p>The Department of Elections through <a href="#">COMET</a>.</p> <p>And</p> <p>Your local <a href="#">General Registrar</a>.</p>		Within 10 days of meeting specific conditions. <a href="#">See conditions listed here</a> and in <a href="#">VA Code § 24.2-947.1</a> .
<b>6</b>	<p><a href="#">Campaign Finance Reports</a></p> <p>§§ 24.2 <a href="#">Chapter 9.3</a></p>		The Department of Elections through <a href="#">COMET</a> .		According to the <a href="#">schedule</a> published by the Department of Elections.

## Follow these steps to file your candidacy:

- 1 Fill out and submit the [Certificate of Candidate Qualification – Local Offices](#) (SBE-501).



Find in Virginia Code §§ [24.2-501](#) and [24.2-503](#).



### Primary candidates

File starting **January 2, 2024**.

File ending **April 4, 2024 at 5 pm**.

### Non-primary party and independent candidates

File starting **January 2, 2024**.

File ending **June 18, 2024 at 7 pm**.

All candidates can mail this form by the deadline and the general registrar will accept it.

You must:

- Pay the postage and send by registered or certified mail.
- Keep the receipt and a copy of the mailed form in case the general registrar asks for proof that you mailed this form before the deadline.



Submit this form to your [General Registrar](#).

## 2 Fill out and submit the [LOCAL Statement of Economic Interests](#) (if required).



Find in Virginia Code §§ [24.2-502](#) and [24.2-503](#).

Required of a candidate for a constitutional office OR a candidate for member of the governing body or elected school board of any county, city, or town with a population in excess of 3,500 persons.



### Primary candidates

File starting **January 2, 2024**.

File ending **April 4, 2024 at 5 pm**.

### Non-primary party and independent candidates

File starting **January 2, 2024**.

File ending **June 18, 2024 at 7 pm**.

All candidates can mail this form by the deadline and the general registrar will accept it.

You must:

- Pay the postage and send by registered or certified mail.
- Keep the receipt and a copy of the mailed form in case the general registrar asks for proof that you mailed this form before the deadline.



Submit this form to your [General Registrar](#).



An incumbent seeking re-election to the office they currently hold, who filed their Statement of Economic Interests pursuant to Va. Code § [2.2-3115](#), i.e. annual filing, is not required to file another Statement of Economic Interests as a candidate. This also applies to an interim appointee who is seeking election to his/her appointed office.

### 3 and 4b Submit Primary Filing fee and receipt.



Find in Virginia Code §§ [24.2-523](#) and [24.2-524](#).

Contact your local Treasurer or Director of Finance for fee amount.



Submit payment starting **January 2, 2024**.

Submit payment before **April 4, 2024 at 5 pm**.

Submit Primary Filing Fee Receipt (4b), Declaration of Candidacy (4a), and petition signatures (4c) together between **March 18, 2024 at 12 pm through April 4, 2024 at 5 pm**.

**Non-primary party and independent candidates do not need to pay a filing fee.**



Submit your payment to the Treasurer or Director of Finance in the locality where you live. They will issue a receipt showing payment of the primary filing fee.



Keep the receipt for your payment. You will need to submit this with your Declaration of Candidacy (4a) and petition signatures (4c).

Contact your local Treasurer or Director of Finance for fee amount.

### What happens to my primary filing fee if I get disqualified, run unopposed, or withdraw?

**If you get disqualified or run unopposed in the primary**, you will receive a refund for the primary filing fee.

**If you withdraw**, you can receive a refund if the general registrar receives your withdrawal notice (see page 13 below) before the party files their ELECT-527 Party Certification of Primary Candidates form. Parties may file this form between April 4, 2024 at 5:01 pm through April 9, 2024.



**4a** Fill out and submit a [Declaration of Candidacy](#) form (SBE-505/520).

Find in Virginia Code §§ [24.2-505](#), [24.2-507](#), [24.2-520](#), and [24.2-522](#).

**Primary candidates**

File starting **March 18, 2024 at 12 pm.**

File ending **April 4, 2024 at 5 pm.**

**Independent candidates**

File starting **January 2, 2024.**

File ending **June 18, 2024 at 7 pm.**

Your general registrar must **receive** this form by the deadline listed above. A postmark or other mailing service timestamp does not qualify.



Submit this form along with:

- the Petitions of Qualified Voters (4c) **AND**
  - the Primary filing receipt (4b) (if required)
- to
- Primary candidates: Chairman of your local political party
  - All other candidates: your [General Registrar](#).



If you are a party candidate nominated by a method other than a primary then you do not need to submit a Declaration of Candidacy unless required by your party.

**4c** Collect petition signatures and submit the [Petitions of Qualified Voters](#) (SBE-506/521).





Find in Virginia Code §§ [24.2-505\(D\)](#), [24.2-506](#), [24.2-507](#), [24.2-521](#), and [24.2-522](#).

Find in [1 VAC 20-50-20](#) and [1 VAC 20-50-30](#).

Check local charter for additional or different requirements.

Contact the local attorney for guidance.

	Primary Candidates	Non-primary party candidates	Independent Candidates
	<p>Collect signatures:</p> <p>Tuesday, January 2, 2024 – Thursday, April 4, 2024.</p> <p>File starting: March 18, 2024 at 12 pm.</p> <p>File ending: April 4, 2024 at 5 pm.</p>	<p>You do not need to submit this form.</p>	<p>Collect signatures:</p> <p>Tuesday, January 2, 2024, – Tuesday, June 18, 2024.</p> <p>File starting: January 2, 2024.</p> <p>File ending: June 18, 2024 at 7 pm.</p>
	<p>Submit these forms to the Chairman of your local political party.</p>		<p>File these forms with your <a href="#">General Registrar</a>.</p>



Primary candidates:

- File petition pages, Declaration of Candidacy, and primary filing fee receipt with the Chairman of your local political party.
- See table on page 11 for the number of signatures needed.



Independent candidate:

- File petition pages with your [General Registrar](#).
- Petition pages do **not** have to be submitted all at once.
- The first set of petition pages you submit must be accompanied by your Declaration of Candidacy.
- See table on page 11 for the number of signatures needed.
- Independent candidates will appear on the ballot in the order of time of filing for the office - the time at which the independent candidate files the required number of petition signatures.
- At the time of filing you can request notification of any problems that can be corrected before the filing deadline. Make this request in writing and address it to your [General Registrar](#). They will try to get back to you but cannot guarantee a timely response.
- If you do not qualify as a candidate because you did not have enough signatures, then you can submit an appeal to your [General Registrar](#) regarding the petition signatures.
  - Submit your appeal **within 5 days** from when the disqualification notice was issued.
  - You will need to prove that you have the correct number of signatures from qualified voters before the deadline.
  - Find more information in [1 VAC 20-50-30](#).

## Things to remember about petitions:

### Petition Pages must...

- be on the State Board of Elections form, and you cannot alter it in any way.
- be either letter or legal size. Both are available on the [Department of Elections website](#).
- be one page printed on the front and back. You can make as many copies as you need.
- contain the signature, printed full name, and full residence address of each qualified voter and the date the voter signed. The last four (4) digits of the qualified voter’s Social Security number are helpful, but not required.

### The petition circulator...

- must be a legal resident of the United States and must sign the affidavit for each page in front of a notary.
- cannot be a minor.
- can be an individual who was convicted of a felony only if their voting rights are restored.
- cannot be the circulator of the page on which they sign the petition.

### When collecting your petition signatures, it is helpful to remember that...

- Because people who are not registered to vote often sign petitions for candidates, we recommended that you collect at least 1 ½ times the number of signatures required.
- [1VAC20-50-20](#) lists material omissions for petition signatures and pages. If your petition has a material omission, it may render the page or signature invalid.

## Petition Signature Requirements

Office you seek	Size of locality (if relevant)	Number of signatures needed from qualified voters
Candidate for a constitutional office		125 signatures
Membership on the governing body or elected school board of...	Any county or city	125 signatures
Membership on the governing body or elected school board of...	Any town with more than 3,500 registered voters.	125 signatures
Membership on the governing body or elected school board of...	Any town with 1,500 – 3,500 registered voters.	50 signatures
Membership on the governing body or elected school board of...	Any town with less than 1,500 registered voters.	No signatures required
Membership on the governing body or elected school board of...	An election district, not at large, with 1000 or less registered voters	50 signatures
Membership on the governing body or elected school board of...	A ward or other district not at large.	25 signatures
Director of a soil and water conservation district		25 signatures
All other candidates		50 signatures

The next two requirements relate to Campaign Finance accounts and reporting.

## 5 Fill out and submit a [Statement of Organization for a Candidate](#).



Find in Virginia Code Title 24.2 [Chapter 9.3](#).



Within 10 days of one of the following:

- you accept a contribution.
- you spend any funds.
- you pay a filing fee.
- you file a Certificate of Candidate Qualification.
- you appoint a campaign treasurer, campaign committee, or campaign depository.



Submit copies to:

- The Department of Elections according to the instructions in [COMET](#)
- The [General Registrar](#) in the locality where you live (after filing through COMET)



If you do not submit this form you may have to pay penalties.

Learn about the [Campaign Finance Laws and Policies](#).

## 6 Submit Campaign Finance Reports



Find in Virginia Code Title 24.2 [Chapter 9.3](#).



Submit reports according to the [schedule](#) published by the Department of Elections.



Submit copies to the Department of Elections through [COMET](#).

## Can I withdraw my candidacy?



Find in Virginia Code § [24.2-612.2](#).



**To be withdrawn from the ballot you must submit a signed written notice declaring your intent to withdraw from the election.**

ELECT offers the [ELECT-612.2 Candidate Withdrawal Form](#) to help facilitate the candidate withdrawal process.



A withdrawing candidate should submit their withdrawal notice with enough time before absentee voting commences to ensure their name is removed from the ballot.

If you submit your form after your local ballots are printed, your name will not be removed from the ballot, but you will no longer be a candidate.



**Submit your written withdrawal to your [general registrar](#). Electronic submissions of signed withdrawal notices are permissible.**

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### General Disclaimer

The electronic version of this Candidate Bulletin can be found on the Department of Elections website:  
<https://www.elections.virginia.gov/candidatepac-info/candidate-bulletins/index.html>

Candidates are responsible for complying with all current applicable local, state, and federal laws and regulations.

This Candidate Bulletin provides an overview of Virginia electoral requirements only. It does not purport to provide legal advice or binding statements of official policy. Rather, the Candidate Bulletin describes election law found in the Code of Virginia. Applicable laws and regulations are subject to change in content and interpretation.