



★ VIRGINIA ★
DEPARTMENT *of* ELECTIONS

Candidate Bulletin

How to Run for Member, United States Senate

Ballot Access Requirements for the
August 4, 2026, US Senate Primary Elections
and
November 3, 2026, US Senate General Elections

Definitions

Incumbent – An officeholder seeking reelection to the same office.

Independent – An individual who is seeking to run in a General Election without running as a Republican or Democrat (may include a recognized party or no party).

Non-primary party candidate – An individual who is seeking the nomination of a political party by a means other than a primary.

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.

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

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 § [24.2-612](#).


Va. Code – Virginia Code


VAC – Virginia Administrative Code


ELECT – The Virginia Department of Elections
1100 Bank Street, 1st Floor
Richmond, VA 23219
EA@Elections.Virginia.gov

Key Icons

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

 - Indicates beginning and/or ending deadlines for filing documents.

 - Indicates where to file documents.

 - Indicates additional information that may be helpful.

How candidates get on the ballot in VA

Follow these instructions if you are running for a US Senate seat.

Follow these instructions to get on the ballot for:

- The Primary Election on Tuesday, August 4, 2026.
- The General Election on Tuesday, November 3, 2026.

2026 Election Calendar

Type of Election	Candidates: Last Day to File
Primary	
Tuesday, August 4, 2026	Thursday, April 2, 2026, 5:00 pm
	Find in Code: Va. Code §§ 24.2-503 , 24.2-522 and 24.2-524
General	
Tuesday, November 3, 2026	Tuesday, June 16, 2026, 7:00 pm
	Find in Code: Va. Code §§ 24.2-503 and 24.2-507

Do you fulfill the basic qualifications to be a candidate?

[\(U.S. Constitution, Article I, Section 3, Clause 3\)](#)

- You will have been a citizen of the United States for **nine** years immediately preceding the date of **taking office**, January 3, 2027.
- You will be **thirty years of age** on or before the date of **taking office**, January 3, 2027.
- You will be an **inhabitant of the Commonwealth of Virginia** on or before the date of **the election**, November 3, 2026.

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?
1	Certificate of Candidate Qualification (Federal Office) ELECT-501(FED) Va. Code §§ 24.2-501 24.2-503	Deemed to be filed by the deadline if mailed to ELECT on or before the deadline, postage prepaid by registered or certified mail. Receipt must show date mailed.	Virginia Department of Elections 1100 Bank St, 1st Floor Richmond, VA 23219	Primary candidates: Friday, January 2, 2026 Non-primary party and independent candidates: Friday, January 2, 2026	Thursday, April 2, 2026, 5:00 pm Tuesday, June 16, 2026, 7:00 pm
2a	Primary Filing Fee Va. Code §§ 24.2-523 24.2-524	Primary candidates: Primary filing fee for 2026, will be \$3,480. This can be paid by check, certified check, money order, or credit card. Make checks payable to Treasurer of Virginia.	Primary candidates: Virginia Department of Elections	Primary candidates: Friday, January 2, 2026 <i>Non-primary party and independent candidates are not required to file.</i>	Thursday, April 2, 2026, 5:00 pm
2b	Primary Filing Fee Receipt Va. Code §§ 24.2-522 24.2-523 24.2-524	Primary candidates: Must be filed with your Declaration of Candidacy (3) and Petitions of Qualified Voters (4a).	Primary candidates: Virginia Department of Elections	Primary candidates: Monday, March 16, 2026, Noon (12:00 pm) <i>Non-primary party and independent candidates are not required to file.</i>	Thursday, April 2, 2026, 5:00 pm
3	Declaration of Candidacy SBE-505/520 Va. Code §§ 24.2-505 24.2-507 24.2-520 24.2-522	Must be filed with your Petitions of Qualified Voters (4a) and, if applicable, primary filing fee receipt (2b).	Primary and Independent candidates: Virginia Department of Elections	Primary candidates: Monday, March 16, 2026, Noon (12:00 pm) <i>Non-primary party candidates are not required to file.</i> Independent candidates: Friday, January 2, 2026	Thursday, April 2, 2026, 5:00 pm Tuesday, June 16, 2026, 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?
4a	<p>Petitions of Qualified Voters ELECT-506/521</p> <p>Va. Code §§ 24.2-506 24.2-507 24.2-521 24.2-522.</p> <p>Va. Admin Code 1 VAC 20-50-20 1 VAC 20-50-30</p>	<p>Candidates may begin collecting signatures on January 1, 2026. Petition pages are not required to be filed all at the same time; you may file pages throughout the filing window. However, the first petition page filed must be filed with your Declaration of Candidacy (3) and, if applicable, primary filing fee receipt (2b).</p>	<p>Primary candidates: Virginia Department of Elections</p> <p>Must be sealed in one or more containers with a Statement of Petitions (4b) attached to the outside of each container.</p> <p>Independent candidates: Virginia Department of Elections</p>	<p>Primary candidates: Monday, March 16, 2026, Noon (12:00 pm)</p> <p><i>Non-primary party candidates are not required to file.</i></p> <p>Independent candidates: Friday, January 2, 2026</p>	<p>Thursday, April 2, 2026, 5:00 pm</p> <p>Tuesday, June 16, 2026, 7:00 pm</p>
4b	<p>Statement of Petitions ELECT-522(C)</p> <p>Va. Code §§ 24.2-521 24.2-522</p>	<p>Primary candidates: Must be attached to the outside of each sealed container holding the candidate’s petition pages (4a)</p>	<p>Primary candidates: Virginia Department of Elections</p>	<p>Primary candidates: Monday, March 16, 2026, Noon (12:00 pm)</p> <p><i>Non-primary party and independent candidates are not required to file.</i></p>	<p>Thursday, April 2, 2026, 5:00 pm</p>

Follow these steps to file your candidacy:

1 Fill out and submit a [Certificate of Candidate Qualification – Federal Offices \(ELECT-501\(FED\)\)](#).



Reference:

- Virginia Code §§ [24.2-501](#) and [24.2-503](#).
- State Board of Elections [Policy 2010-003](#)



Primary candidates:

File starting **January 2, 2026**.

File ending **April 2, 2026, at 5 pm**.

Non-primary party and independent candidates:

File starting **January 2, 2026**.

File ending **June 16, 2026, at 7 pm**.

This form is deemed to be filed by the deadline if mailed to the Virginia Department of Elections (ELECT) on or before the deadline, postage prepaid by registered or certified mail. Receipt must show date mailed. ELECT may request a scanned copy of the receipt.



Mail or deliver this form to: Virginia Department of Elections.
1100 Bank Street, 1st Floor
Richmond, VA 23219



The contact information provided on this form will be included in the candidate list on ELECT's [website](#).

2a, b Submit the **\$3,480** primary filing fee and receipt.

*Non-primary party and independent candidates **are not required to file**.*



Reference:

- Virginia Code §§ [24.2-522](#), [24.2-523](#) and [24.2-524](#).
- State Board of Elections [Policy 2010-003](#)



Filing fee:

File starting **January 2, 2026**.

File ending **April 2, 2026, at 5 pm**.

Filing fee receipt:

File starting **March 16, 2026, at noon (12 pm)**.

File ending **April 2, 2026, at 5 pm**.

The primary filing fee receipt **must be filed with** your Declaration of Candidacy (3) and Petitions of Qualified Voters (4a).

The receipt must be **received** by the applicable deadline listed above. A postmark or other mailing service timestamp does not qualify.



The primary filing fee can be paid by check, certified check, money order, or credit card. Make checks payable to Treasurer of Virginia.

Filing fee: Mail or deliver to: Virginia Department of Elections.
1100 Bank Street, 1st Floor
Richmond, VA 23219

To pay by phone using a credit card: (804) 864-8901.

Filing fee receipt: Mail or deliver to the Virginia Department of Elections.



The primary filing fee is 2% of the office's current one-year minimum salary. The current salary for members of the US House of Representatives is \$174,000. 2% is \$3,480.

What happens to my primary filing fee if I am disqualified, unopposed, or withdraw?

- **If you are disqualified or unopposed** your filing fee will be refunded.
- **If you withdraw**
 - **BEFORE** the party chair files the Party Certification of Primary Candidates form with ELECT your filing fee will be refunded.
 - **AFTER** the party chair files the Party Certification of Primary Candidates form with ELECT your filing fee will **NOT** be refunded.
 - The window for party chairs to file is April 2, 2026, 5:01 pm, through April 7, 2026.

3 Fill out and submit a [Declaration of Candidacy \(SBE-505/520\)](#).

Non-primary party candidates are not required to file.



Reference:

- Virginia Code §§ [24.2-505](#), [24.2-507](#), [24.2-520](#), and [24.2-522](#).
- State Board of Elections [Policy 2010-003](#)



Primary candidates:

File starting **March 16, 2026, at noon (12:00 pm)**.

File ending **April 2, 2026, at 5 pm**.

Independent candidates:

File starting **January 2, 2026**.

File ending **June 16, 2026, at 7 pm**.

The Declaration of Candidacy **must be filed with** your primary filing fee receipt (2b) if applicable, and the first Petitions of Qualified Voters (4a) page filed.

The form must be **received** by the applicable deadline listed above. A postmark or other mailing service timestamp does not qualify.



Mail or deliver this form to the Virginia Department of Elections.



Effective July 1, 2024 ([HB90/SB109](#)) the declaration of candidacy was revised to include a statement that if the signer's name appears on the primary ballot and they are not nominated then their name is not to be printed on the ballots for that office in the succeeding general election.

4a, b Collect petition signatures and submit [Petitions of Qualified Voters \(SBE-506/521\)](#).

Non-primary party candidates are not required to file.



Reference:

- Virginia Code §§ [24.2-506](#), [24.2-507](#), [24.2-521](#), and [24.2-522](#).
- Virginia Administrative Code [1 VAC 20-50-20](#) and [1 VAC 20-50-30](#).
- State Board of Elections [Policy 2010-003](#)

Primary Candidates

Independent Candidates



Collect signatures:

January 1, 2026, through April 2, 2026

Collect signatures:

January 1, 2026, through June 16, 2026

Submit pages:

March 16, 2026, at noon (12 pm) through April 2, 2026, at 5 pm.

Must be sealed in one or more containers with a [Statement of Petitions \(ELECT-522\(C\)\) \(5b\)](#) attached to the outside of each container.

Submit pages:

January 2, 2026, through June 16, 2026, 7 pm



Mail or deliver the petition pages to:

Virginia Department of Elections
1100 Bank Street, 1st Floor
Richmond, VA 23219

Must be sealed in one or more containers with a [Statement of Petitions \(ELECT-522\(C\)\) \(5b\)](#) attached to the outside of each container.

Mail or deliver the petition pages to:

Virginia Department of Elections
1100 Bank Street, 1st Floor
Richmond, VA 23219



For a candidate for:

Number of petition signatures you need from qualified voters

United States Senator

10,000 signatures, including the signatures of at least 400 qualified voters from each congressional district in the Commonwealth

Petition pages are not required to be filed all at the same time; you may file pages throughout the filing window. However, **the first petition page filed must be filed with your Declaration of Candidacy (3) and, if applicable, primary filing fee receipt (2b).**

The form must be **received** by the applicable deadline listed above. A postmark or other mailing service timestamp does not qualify.

Independent candidates:

May request notification of any problems that can be corrected before the filing deadline. Make this request by email to the Virginia Department of Elections at EA@Elections.Virginia.gov. ELECT will provide the requested information when able but cannot guarantee a timely response as it will be dependent on the processing of the petition pages.

If notified by ELECT that the required number of qualified voter signatures was not submitted, an appeal can be submitted to the State Board of Elections at EA@Elections.Virginia.gov. The appeal must be submitted **within 5 days** of the disqualification notice being 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 Virginia Department of Elections [form](#). The form cannot be altered in any way.
- Be printed on one piece of paper, front and back. If the back is on a second piece of paper, the entire page (front and back) will be rendered invalid.
- Contain the signature, printed full name, and full registered 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 (SSN) would help in confirming the voter but is not required.

The petition circulator...

- Must be a legal resident of the United States.
- 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 signed as a voter.
- Must sign the affidavit on each page they circulated in front of a notary.

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

- Because not all the people who sign petitions are qualified voters, ELECT recommends collecting at least 1 1/2 times the number of signatures required.
- Giving clear instructions on how a voter should fill out the page (provide all information in legible handwriting) will better the chances of a signature being accepted.
- [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.

How do I withdraw my candidacy?



Reference: Virginia Code § [24.2-612.2](#).



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



Mail, deliver, or email to your local [general registrar](#)'s office. The general registrar will notify other affected general registrars and/or the Virginia Department of Elections, as appropriate.



To be withdrawn from the ballot you must submit a signed and notarized notice of withdrawal declaring your intent to withdraw from the election. Use the Virginia Department of Elections' [Candidate Withdrawal Form](#) (ELECT-612.2).

If a candidate submits a notarized withdrawal notice to the general registrar between 44 days and 7 days before a primary election, and the result is only one remaining candidate that would then be unopposed, the remaining candidate will be declared the party's nominee for the office sought and the primary election will be cancelled.

Qualified Independent Candidate that Wishes to be Recognized as a Third-Party Candidate

The following two letters must be filed:

1. A letter signed by the State Chair stating the following:
 - The group has been in existence for at least six months prior to the filing of its nominee.
 - The group has a state central committee composed of registered voters from each of Virginia's 11 congressional districts in continual existence for the six months prior to the filing of its nominee.
 - The group has a party plan and bylaws.
2. A letter signed by the State Chair and signed by the candidate stating the following:
 - The Chair certifies the candidate is the nominee of the party.
 - The candidate accepts the nomination of the party.



Reference: Virginia Code § [24.2-613](#).



File starting **January 2, 2026**.
File ending **June 22, 2026**.



Submit the two letters to the Virginia Department of Elections:

- Email: ea@elections.virginia.gov.
- Mail or deliver: Virginia Department of Elections
1100 Bank Street, 1st Floor
Richmond, VA 23219

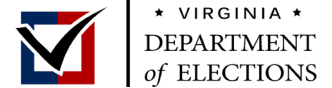


The Virginia Department of Elections recommends that the independent candidate provide this information to the State Chair of their party. This presumably will ensure that the party will provide the nominee with what they need to file with the Virginia Department of Elections by the appropriate deadline.

Virginia Code § [24.2-613](#) allows for political party identification on the ballot for federal, statewide, and General Assembly offices only.

Continue to next page for Candidate Ballot Access Quick Look One Pagers

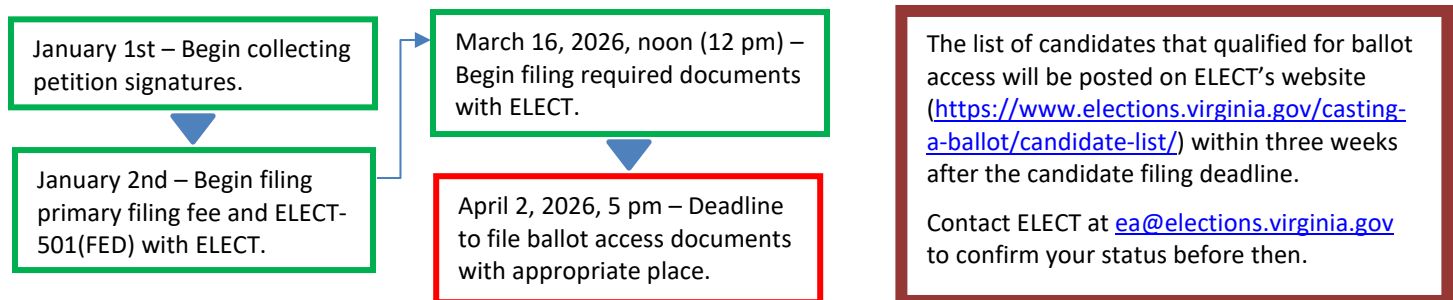
2026 August Primary Elections **US Senate Primary Party** Candidate Ballot Access Quick Look One Pager



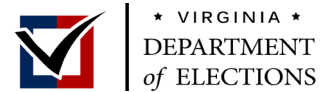
Additional information can be found in the US House of Representatives Candidate Bulletin found on ELECT’s website: <https://www.elections.virginia.gov/candidatepac-info/candidate-bulletins/>.

- A. File the following with the **Virginia Department of Elections (ELECT)** between **1/2/26** and **5 pm, 4/2/26**.
 - 1. **Certificate of Candidate Qualification (Federal Offices)**
[ELECT-501\(FED\)-Certificate-of-Candidate-Qualification-Federal-Offices-rev-11-10-23.pdf](https://www.elections.virginia.gov/media/formwarehouse/candidate-qualification-federal-offices-rev-11-10-23.pdf)
**May be postmarked by 4/2/26 deadline if mailed registered or certified USPS mail. Be prepared to provide a copy of the receipt on 4/2/26.*
 - 2. **Primary Filing Fee (\$3,480)**
- B. File the following documents with the **Virginia Department of Elections (ELECT)** between **noon (12 pm), 3/16/26** and **5 pm, 4/2/26**.
**All of these documents must be filed at the same time.*
 - 1. **Receipt for Primary Filing Fee**
 - 2. **Declaration of Candidacy**
[https://www.elections.virginia.gov/media/formwarehouse/ballot-access-candidate-qualification/sbe-505-520-declaration-of-candidacy/ELECT-505-520-Declaration-of-Candidacy-\(Rev-7-1-24\).pdf](https://www.elections.virginia.gov/media/formwarehouse/ballot-access-candidate-qualification/sbe-505-520-declaration-of-candidacy/ELECT-505-520-Declaration-of-Candidacy-(Rev-7-1-24).pdf)
 - 3. **Petitions of Qualified Voters***
[https://www.elections.virginia.gov/media/formwarehouse/ballot-access-candidate-qualification/sbe-506-521-petition-of-qualified-voters/ELECT-506-521-Petition-of-Qualified-Voters-letter-size-\(rev-5-8-24\).pdf](https://www.elections.virginia.gov/media/formwarehouse/ballot-access-candidate-qualification/sbe-506-521-petition-of-qualified-voters/ELECT-506-521-Petition-of-Qualified-Voters-letter-size-(rev-5-8-24).pdf)
Effective July 1, 2024 (SB165) candidates may begin collecting petition signatures on **January first of the year in which the election is held.*
**Signature Requirement: 10,000 signatures, including the signatures of at least 400 qualified voters from each congressional district in the Commonwealth*
Submission Requirement: Petition pages **must be sealed in one or more containers with a Statement of Petitions attached to each container.*
While you do not need to file all petition pages at the same time, the first page filed must be filed with the primary filing fee receipt and Declaration of Candidacy. The receipt and Declaration should **not be in the sealed container.*
**Find more information on petitions in Virginia Administrative Code 1VAC20-50-20:
<https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title1/agency20/chapter50/section20/>*
 - 4. **Statement of Petitions**
[https://www.elections.virginia.gov/media/formwarehouse/campaign-finance/2020/ELECT-522\(C\) Statement of Petition Signatures for Federal Primary Candidate.pdf](https://www.elections.virginia.gov/media/formwarehouse/campaign-finance/2020/ELECT-522(C) Statement of Petition Signatures for Federal Primary Candidate.pdf)
**Petition pages must be sealed in one or more containers with a Statement of Petitions attached to each container.*

Candidate Flow Chart



2026 November General Election **US Senate Non-Primary Party** Candidate Ballot Access Quick Look One Pager



Additional information can be found in the US House of Representatives Candidate Bulletin found on ELECT's website: <https://www.elections.virginia.gov/candidatepac-info/candidate-bulletins/>.

File the following documents with the **Virginia Department of Elections (ELECT)** between **1/2/26** and **7 pm, 6/16/26**.

1. **Certificate of Candidate Qualification (Federal Office)**

[ELECT-501\(FED\)-Certificate-of-Candidate-Qualification-Federal-Offices-rev-11-10-23.pdf](#)

**May be postmarked by 6/16/26 deadline if mailed registered or certified USPS mail. Be prepared to provide a copy of the receipt on 6/16/26.*

Note: The list of candidates that qualified for ballot access will be posted on ELECT's website (<https://www.elections.virginia.gov/casting-a-ballot/candidate-list/>) within three weeks after the candidate filing deadline. Contact ELECT at ea@elections.virginia.gov to confirm your status before then.

2026 November General Election **US Senate Independent** Candidate Ballot Access Quick Look One Pager



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Additional information can be found in the US Senate Candidate Bulletin found on ELECT’s website:
<https://www.elections.virginia.gov/candidatepac-info/candidate-bulletins/>.

File the following with the **Virginia Department of Elections (ELECT)** between **1/2/26** and **7 pm, 6/16/26**.

1. Certificate of Candidate Qualification

[ELECT-501\(FED\)-Certificate-of-Candidate-Qualification-Federal-Offices-rev-11-10-23.pdf](https://www.elections.virginia.gov/media/formwarehouse/ballot-access-candidate-qualification/sbe-501-520-Certificate-of-Candidate-Qualification-Federal-Offices-rev-11-10-23.pdf)

**May be postmarked by 6/16/25 deadline if mailed registered or certified USPS mail. Be prepared to provide a copy of the receipt on 6/16/26.*

2. Declaration of Candidacy

[https://www.elections.virginia.gov/media/formwarehouse/ballot-access-candidate-qualification/sbe-505-520-declaration-of-candidacy/ELECT-505-520-Declaration-of-Candidacy-\(Rev-7-1-24\).pdf](https://www.elections.virginia.gov/media/formwarehouse/ballot-access-candidate-qualification/sbe-505-520-declaration-of-candidacy/ELECT-505-520-Declaration-of-Candidacy-(Rev-7-1-24).pdf)

**Must be filed with the first petition pages filed.*

3. Petitions of Qualified Voters

[https://www.elections.virginia.gov/media/formwarehouse/ballot-access-candidate-qualification/sbe-506-521-petition-of-qualified-voters/ELECT-506-521-Petition-of-Qualified-Voters-letter-size-\(rev-5-8-24\).pdf](https://www.elections.virginia.gov/media/formwarehouse/ballot-access-candidate-qualification/sbe-506-521-petition-of-qualified-voters/ELECT-506-521-Petition-of-Qualified-Voters-letter-size-(rev-5-8-24).pdf)

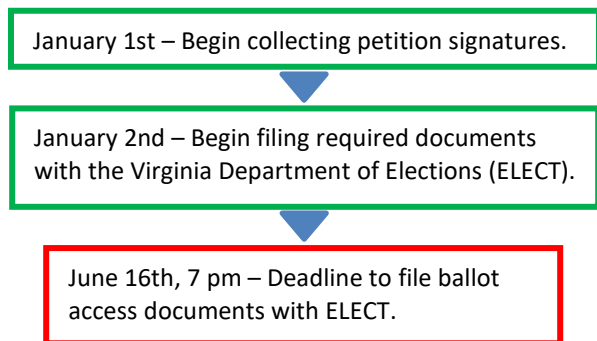
Effective July 1, 2024 (SB165) candidates may begin collecting petition signatures on **January first of the year in which the election is held.*

**Signature Requirement: 10,000 signatures from qualified voters, including the signatures of at least 400 qualified voters from each congressional district in the Commonwealth.*

**While you do not need to file all petition pages at the same time, the first page filed must be filed with the Declaration of Candidacy.*

**Find more information on petitions in Virginia Administrative Code 1VAC20-50-20:
<https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title1/agency20/chapter50/section20/>*

Candidate Flow Chart



The list of candidates that qualified for ballot access will be posted on ELECT’s website (<https://www.elections.virginia.gov/casting-a-ballot/candidate-list/>) within three weeks after the candidate filing deadline.

Contact ELECT at ea@elections.virginia.gov to confirm your status before then.

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.