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MONTANA SECRETARY OF STATE

## Information for Political Party Qualification

Montana Secretary of State

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### ◆ Filing Deadlines ([13-10-Part 6](#), MCA)

- **January 30, 2026:** Deadline to submit signed political party qualification petitions and affidavits of signature gatherers to [county election administrators](#), per [13-10-606\(3\)](#).
- **February 27, 2026:** Deadline by which county election administrators shall ensure the petition is received by the Secretary of State, per [13-10-609\(2\)](#).
- **March 4, 2026:** Deadline for political party candidates to file Declaration and Oath of Candidacy and pay filing fee (unless indigent) to the appropriate filing officer. [13-10-201\(7\)](#), [HB 207](#)
- **March 6, 2026:** If a minor party petition is filed, the Secretary of State shall certify that the political party does or does not qualify by this date, [13-10-610\(3\)](#).

### ◆ Links:

- [Political Party Qualification Petition](#)
- [Petition Signature Gatherer Unsworn Declaration](#)
- [Petition Signature Gatherer Affidavit](#)
- [Title 13 Election Laws](#)

### ◆ Signature Requirements ([13-10-606](#), (2)&(3) MCA)

- The number of signatures required for political party ballot access is **5,000**, which must include the registered voters in at least one-third of the House districts, equal to 5% or more of the total votes cast for the successful candidate for governor at the last general election in those districts, or 150 electors in those districts, whichever is less.
- There is **no earliest date to gather** political party qualification petition signatures. However, **the earliest to submit** signed political party qualification petitions to county election administrators is 9 months (May 27, 2026) before the filing date with the Secretary of State, as above, of February 27, 2026. (Also, candidate declaration forms cannot be filed with the appropriate filing officer before **February 17, 2026**, or the date by which the party is qualified, whichever is later.)

### ◆ Other Information

- A current list of qualified political parties is at [sosmt.gov/Elections/Parties](http://sosmt.gov/Elections/Parties).
- If the party qualifies for ballot access, the deadline by which party candidates must file their filing form with the required filing fee is **March 4, 2026**. ([13-10-201](#), MCA/ HB 207)
- A candidate who files as an [indigent](#) candidate is not required to pay the filing fee, but must file petition signatures. See [Filing Information and Petition Signature Requirements for indigent candidate requirements](#).
- Under [13-10-602](#), MCA, a political party and its regularly nominated candidates, members, and officers have the sole and exclusive right to the use of the party name. A candidate for office may not use any word of the name of any other political party or organization other than that by which the candidate is nominated in a manner that indicates or implies the individual is a candidate of the non-nominating party.