



2026 CANDIDATE CALENDAR

(PRIMARY AND GENERAL ELECTION)

Montana Secretary of State

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2026																												
January							February							March							April							
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	
				1	2	3	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7				1	2	3	4	
4	5	6	7	8	9	10	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	
18	19	20	21	22	23	24	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	
25	26	27	28	29	30	31								29	30	31					26	27	28	29	30			
May							June							July							August							
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	
					1	2	1	2	3	4	5	6			1	2	3	4							1			
3	4	5	6	7	8	9	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
10	11	12	13	14	15	16	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	
24	25	26	27	28	29	30	28	29	30					26	27	28	29	30	31	23	24	25	26	27	28	29		
31														30	31						30	31						
September							October							November							December							
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	
		1	2	3	4	5					1	2	3	1	2	3	4	5	6	7				1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
13	14	15	16	17	18	19	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	
20	21	22	23	24	25	26	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	
27	28	29	30				25	26	27	28	29	30	31	29	30						27	28	29	30	31			

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DEADLINE	ACTIVITIES	REFERENCE MCA/ARM/LEGISLATION
Monday, November 3, 2025	The date by which a candidate for a legislative position must be a resident of Montana.	For at least one year next preceding the general election Article V, Part V, Sect. 4 MT Const
January 30, 2026	Deadline to submit signed political party qualification petitions and affidavits of signature gatherers to county election administrators for a new political party.	No later than 4 weeks before the final date for filing the petition with the Secretary of State 13-10-606(3)
Tuesday, February 17 105 days before the election	Candidate Filing Opens – 8:00 AM	No sooner than 105 days before the election 13-10-201(7) ; 13-1-403(1,2) ; 13-1-502(1,2) , HB 207
February 27 95 days before the election	Deadline to submit new political party qualification petitions by county election administrators to the Secretary of State’s office.	95 days before the primary. 13-10-609(2)
March 4 90 days before the election	Candidate filing closes – 5:00 p.m.	No sooner than 90 days before the election 13-10-201(7) ; 13-1-403(1,2) ; 13-1-502(1,2) ; 13-10-211(1) HB 207
	Candidate filing closes for write-in candidates for the primary – 5:00 p.m. DEADLINE. Last day for candidates to withdraw from the primary election – 5:00 p.m. Deadline.	A candidate may not withdraw after the filing deadline 13-10-325(1)(b)
	Deadline for candidates to be registered to vote in Montana. (<i>*Note: exception exists for candidates who will turn 18 before the election.</i>)	By the candidate filing deadline 2-16-102(3)
March 6 88 days before the election	Deadline for the Secretary of State to certify that a new political party does or does not qualify for the ballot via party qualification petition.	88 days before the primary 13-10-610(3)

2026 CANDIDATE CALENDAR

DEADLINE	ACTIVITIES	REFERENCE MCA/ARM/LEGISLATION
<p>By March 9 85 days before the election</p>	<p>Deadline for governing bodies to call for a local government election to be held on the date of the primary election</p>	<p>13-14-115 (3) 13-1-405(2)</p>
<p>Within 5 days of filing for office</p>	<p>Candidates file appropriate paperwork with the Commissioner of Political Practices.</p>	<p>13-37-201</p>
<p>By March 12 2 days before March 14</p>	<p>Deadline for the Commissioner of Political Practices to notify the Secretary of State and election administrators of the names of any candidates whose names may not appear on the official ballot because they have not complied with the provisions of MCA Title 13, Chapter 37.</p>	<p>2 calendar days before the certification deadline 13-37-126(5)(b)(i)</p>
<p>March 16* 10 days after the candidate filing deadline</p>	<p>Deadline for the Secretary of State to certify for the ballot the names and designations of statewide and state district candidates to election administrators; deadline for election administrators to certify for the ballot the names of local candidates and local ballot issues.</p>	<p>10 days after the close of candidate filing 13-10-208</p>
<p>March 16* 10 days after the close of candidate filing</p>	<p>Election administrators determine whether <u>local nonpartisan office</u> primary elections are necessary.</p> <p>The governing body may require, by resolution, that a primary election be held for a nonpartisan office</p> <p>An election administrator may give notice that a party's precinct committee election will not be held in that precinct by this date.</p>	<p>13-1-403(4) Not more than 10 days after the close of candidate filing 13-14-115(3) 13-38-201(4)(a)</p>
<p>May 3 6 months before the general election</p>	<p>Date by which legislative candidates must live in the appropriate county, if it contains one or more districts, or legislative district, if it contains all or parts of more than one county (for six months next preceding General Election).</p>	<p>For 6 months preceding the general election Article V, Section 4, MT Const.</p>

2026 CANDIDATE CALENDAR

DEADLINE	ACTIVITIES	REFERENCE MCA/ARM/LEGISLATION
May 26* One week before June 1	Deadline for independent and minor party candidates to submit signed petitions to county election administrators.	One week before the deadline for filing 13-10-503
June 1	Deadline for independent and minor party candidates to file Declaration of Intent for office; deadline for Secretary of State to receive independent and minor party candidate petitions from county election administrators.	Before the scheduled primary election 13-10-503
Tuesday, June 2	PRIMARY ELECTION	First Tuesday after the first Monday in June 13-1-107
By June 16 14 days after the election	County canvass completed – Canvass Board declares nominated the individuals having received the highest number of votes cast for each county-certified office and proclaims the adoption of rejection of county ballot issues.	Within 14 days after each election 13-15-401 13-15-403 , SB 57 13-15-405
After the county canvass is complete	The county election administrator issues certificates of nomination to successful local nominees after the Commissioner of Political Practices provides notification to county election administrators of candidates' compliance with applicable filing requirements.	13-37-127
Within 5 days of the county canvass	Deadline for unsuccessful primary election candidates to initiate contest of primary election nomination. (After county or state canvass, as applicable)	13-36-102
	Deadline for unsuccessful primary election local candidates to apply for a recount, if applicable. (After county or state canvass, as applicable)	13-16-201 , 13-16-301
Within 10 days of official canvass	Deadline for successful primary write-in nominees to file a written Declaration of Acceptance. (After county canvass or state canvass, as applicable)	13-10-204

2026 CANDIDATE CALENDAR

DEADLINE	ACTIVITIES	REFERENCE MCA/ARM/LEGISLATION
*Indicates postponement per 1-1-307		
Monday, June 29 (Scheduled)	State canvass completed – Canvass Board declares nominated the individuals having received the highest number of votes cast for each state certified office and sends certified copies of the reports and results to the Governor.	13-15-502 , 13-15-507
August 5 90 days before the election	5:00 pm Deadline for write-in candidates to file a Declaration of Intent for the general election	By 5:00 p.m. on the 90th day before the general election. 13-10-211 HB 207
August 10 85 days before the election	Deadline for candidates to withdraw from the general election candidacy.	13-10-327
August 19 76 days before the election	Deadline for political parties to appoint replacement candidates to fill vacancies.	13-10-327(2)
August 20 75 days before the election	Deadline for the Secretary of State to certify for the ballot the names and designations of statewide and state district candidates and statewide ballot issues to election administrators; deadline for election administrators to certify for the ballot the names of local candidates and local ballot issues.	13-12-201(1)
Tuesday, November 3	GENERAL ELECTION	13-1-104
By November 17 14 days after the election	County canvass completed – Canvass Board declares elected the individuals having received the highest number of votes cast for each county-certified office and proclaims the adoption or rejection of county ballot issues.	Within 14 days after each election 13-15-401 13-15-403 , SB 57 13-15-405

2026 CANDIDATE CALENDAR

DEADLINE	ACTIVITIES	REFERENCE MCA/ARM/LEGISLATION
*Indicates postponement per 1-1-307		
Within 5 days of the official canvass	Deadline for unsuccessful general election local candidates to petition for a recount, after a county or state canvass, as applicable.	13-16-201 , 13-16-301
Within 10 days of the official canvass	Deadline for successful general write-in candidates to file a written Declaration of Acceptance, after county or state canvass, as applicable.	13-10-204 13-15-111
Monday, November 30 (Scheduled)	State canvass completed – Canvass Board declares elected the individuals having received the highest number of votes cast for each state-certified office and proclaims the adoption or rejection of statewide ballot issues and sends certified copies of the reports and results to the Governor.	Within 27 days of the election, or sooner if all returns are received. 13-15-502
Within 5 days of the state canvass	Deadline for unsuccessful general election federal or state candidates to petition for a recount, if applicable.	13-16-201 , 13-16-211 13-16-301
After the state canvass is complete	Secretary of State issues certificates of election to successful candidates after the Commissioner of Political Practices provides notification to the Secretary of State of candidates’ compliance with applicable filing requirements.	13-37-127 13-27-504
After the certificates of election are issued	Secretary of State certifies legislative roster.	5-2-211



2026 Primary and General Information for Candidates

Montana Secretary of State

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Filing for Office:

An individual may not file a Declaration for Nomination or a Declaration of Intent for more than one political party in a partisan election ([13-10-201](#), MCA). The restriction on filing for multiple offices does not apply to precinct committee candidates, if applicable, or certain local offices, as per [7-1-205](#) MCA. Individuals cannot file for a nonpartisan office as an independent candidate or a political party candidate. The deadline for candidates to file for office is March 4th. A state or local candidate must be a registered voter in Montana by the end of candidate filing, except for candidates under 18 and those who will turn 18 by the election. ([2-16-102](#), MCA)

Filing Fees:

Under [13-10-202](#), MCA:

- (1) for offices having an annual salary of \$2,500 or less and candidates for the legislature, \$15;
- (2) for county offices having an annual salary of more than \$2,500, 0.5% of the total annual salary;
- (3) for president, an amount equivalent to the filing fee required for a United States Senate candidate, \$1740;
- (4) for other offices having an annual salary of more than \$2,500, 1% of the total annual salary;
- (5) for offices in which compensation is paid in fees, \$10;
- (6) For officers of political parties, presidential electors, and officers who receive no salary or fees, no filing fee is required.

Term Limits:

For information on term limits, visit [sosmt.gov/Elections/Term Limits](http://sosmt.gov/Elections/Term_Limits).

Write-In Candidates:

All write-in candidates are required to fill out a Declaration of Intent. A write-in candidate running for an office must file a Declaration of Intent and pay the filing fee at the time of filing for the candidate's write-in votes to be counted. For a **primary** election, declared write-in candidates for partisan offices file as party candidates; for a **general** election, write-in candidates do not file with a partisan, nonpartisan, or independent designation.

Pursuant to [13-15-206](#), MCA, a write-in vote may only be counted if the oval, box, or other designated voting area on the ballot is marked.

Under [13-10-204](#), MCA, to **accept a primary nomination**, a write-in nominee must file a written Declaration of Acceptance; have received at least 5% of the total votes cast for the successful candidate for the same office at the last general election; and comply with [13-37-126](#), MCA. Under [13-15-111](#), MCA, a write-in candidate who receives the most votes in a general election must file a written Declaration of Acceptance; comply with the provisions of [13-37-225](#), MCA.

Campaign Finance – Commissioner of Political Practices:

All candidates, except for some school election candidates, must file a Statement of Candidate Form with the Commissioner of Political Practices. A candidate must file a State of Candidate Form within five days once one of these events occurs: the candidate files for office, appoints a treasurer, receives contributions or spends money for the campaign, or has updates to any of their original Statement of Candidate information. The form can be found at <https://politicalpractices.mt.gov/Home/Forms>. Refer to the [Commissioner of Political Practices](#) website for campaign finance information or contact their office at 406-444-2942.

Additional Candidate Resources:

Contact the [county election office](#) directly or the Secretary of State at soselections@mt.gov or visit sosmt.gov.