



★ VIRGINIA ★
DEPARTMENT *of* ELECTIONS

How to Run for Statewide Office

Ballot Access Requirements for the **June 8, 2021**
Governor, Lieutenant Governor, and Attorney
General **Primary Elections**

and

The **November 2, 2021** Governor, Lieutenant
Governor, and Attorney General **General Elections**

Definitions and Key Icons

COMET – Electronic campaign finance filing system offered by the Department of Elections.

Incumbent – An officeholder who wants to run for 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



- 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 VA

Follow these instructions to get on the ballot for Governor, Lieutenant Governor, or Attorney General of Virginia in:

- The Primary Election on Tuesday June 8, 2021.
- The General Election on Tuesday November 2, 2021.

Election Calendar 2021

Type of Election	Candidates: Last Day to File	Parties: Last Day to File
Primary		
Tuesday, June 8, 2021	Thursday, March 25, 2021 5:00 p.m.	Tuesday, March 30, 2021
Find in Code:	Va. Code §§ 24.2-503 , 24.2-522 and 24.2-524	Va. Code § 24.2-527
General		
Tuesday, November 2, 2021	Tuesday, June 8, 2021 7:00 p.m.	Monday, June 14, 2021 (First day: Thursday, April 22, 2021)
Find in Code:	Va. Code §§ 24.2-503 and 24.2-507	Va. Code §§ 24.2-510 and 24.2-511

Do you fulfill the basic qualifications to be a candidate?

- Citizen of the United States
- Qualified to vote for and hold the office sought
- 30 years of age by the time of the election
- For Governor and Lieutenant Governor: A resident of and registered to vote in the Commonwealth for five years immediately preceding the election
- For Attorney General: Has the qualifications required for a judge of a court of record

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 (Statewide Office) ELECT 501(3) §§ 24.2-501 or 24.2-503		With the Department of Elections. May be sent postmarked by deadline if sent USPS registered or certified mail.	Primary candidates: Saturday January 2, 2021 Non-primary party and independent candidates: Saturday January 2, 2021	Thursday March 25, 2021 at 5:00 p.m. Tuesday June 8, 2021 at 7:00 p.m.
2	Statement of Economic Interest (SOEI) §§ 24.2-502 and 24.2-503	Filing with Department of Elections does not apply to incumbents seeking same office who filed SOEI pursuant to §30-110.	With the Department of Elections. May be sent postmarked by deadline if sent USPS registered or certified mail.	Primary candidates: Saturday January 2, 2021 Non-primary party and independent candidates: Saturday January 2, 2021	Thursday March 25, 2021 at 5:00 p.m. Tuesday June 8, 2021 at 7:00 p.m.
3	Primary Filing Fee §§ 24.2-523 and 24.2-524	Fees outlined below.	With the Department of Elections.	Primary candidates: Saturday January 2, 2021 Non-primary party and independent candidates: You do not need to file.	Thursday, March 25, 2021 at 5:00 p.m.
4a	Receipt for Primary Filing Fee §§ 24.2-523 and 24.2-524		With the Department of Elections.	Primary candidates: Monday March 8, 2021 at 12 p.m. Non-primary party and independent candidates: You do not need to file.	Thursday March 25, 2021 at 5:00 p.m.

	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?
4b	Declaration of Candidacy (SBE 505/520) §§ 24.2-505, 24.2-507, 24.2-520, and 24.2-522	Submit with the receipt for your primary filing fee (4b) and Petitions of Qualified Voters (4c). You do not need to submit all signature pages at once. However, the first time you submit petitions, they must be filed with the Declaration of Candidacy (4a). For the 2021 election cycle, ELECT has been ordered to produce a petition form that can be signed without a circulator being present and submitted electronically. Only the electronic form can be submitted electronically.	Primary candidates: With the Department of Elections.	Primary candidates: Monday March 8, 2021 at 12 p.m.	Thursday March 25, 2021 at 5:00 p.m.
			Independent candidates: With the Department of Elections.	Non-primary party candidates: You do not need to file. Independent candidates: Saturday January 2, 2021	Tuesday June 8, 2021 at 7:00 p.m.
4c	Petitions of Qualified Voters (letter ; legal ; electronic) §§ 24.2-505(D), 24.2-506, 24.2-507, 24.2-521, and 24.2-522. Administrative Code 1 VAC 20-50-20 and 1 VAC 20-50-30	You do not need to submit all signature pages at once. However, the first time you submit petitions, they must be filed with the Declaration of Candidacy (4a). For the 2021 election cycle, ELECT has been ordered to produce a petition form that can be signed without a circulator being present and submitted electronically. Only the electronic form can be submitted electronically.	Primary candidates: Paper: With the Department of Elections in sealed containers. Electronic: With the Department of Elections through COMET .	Primary candidates: Monday March 8, 2021 at 12 p.m.	Thursday March 25, 2021 at 5:00 p.m.
			Independent candidates: Paper: With the Department of Elections. Electronic: With the Department of Elections through COMET	Non-primary party candidates: You do not need to file. Independent candidates: Saturday January 2, 2021	Tuesday June 8, 2021 at 7:00 p.m.
5	Statement of Organization for a Candidate §§ 24.2 Chapter 9.3 § 24.2-947.1		With the Department of Elections through COMET .		Within 10 days of meeting specific conditions. See conditions listed below and in Va. Code § 24.2-947.1 .
6	Campaign Finance Reports §§ 24.2 Chapter 9.3		With the Department of Elections through COMET .		According to the schedule published by the Department of Elections.

Follow these steps to file your candidacy:

- Fill out and submit [the Certificate of Candidate Qualification Form](#) (ELECT 501(3))



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



Primary candidates

File starting **January 2nd, 2021**.

File ending **March 25th, 2021 at 5 pm**.

Non-primary party and independent candidates

File starting **January 2nd, 2021**.

File ending **June 8th, 2021 at 7 pm**.

All candidates can mail this form by the filing deadline and we will accept it.

You must:

- Pay the postage and send to the Department of Elections by registered or certified mail.
- Keep the mailing receipt in case we ask for proof that you mailed this form on or before the deadline.



Submit this form to the Department of Elections.



After you submit this form:

- The Department of Elections puts your information into the Virginia Election and Registration Information System (VERIS).
- The Department of Elections posts your contact information on the Department website.

- Fill out and submit the [Statement of Economic Interests](#).



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



Primary candidates

File starting **January 2nd, 2021**.

File ending **March 25th, 2021 at 5 pm**.

Non-primary party and independent candidates

File starting **January 2nd, 2021.**

File ending **June 8th, 2021 at 7 pm.**

All candidates can mail this form by the filing deadline and we will accept it.

You must:

- Pay the postage and send to the Department of Elections by registered or certified mail.
- Keep the mailing receipt in case we ask for proof that you mailed this form on or before the deadline.



Submit this form to the Department of Elections.



Filing with Department of Elections does not apply to incumbents seeking the same office who filed the Statement of Economic Interests pursuant to [Va. Code § 30.110](#).

Submit Primary Filing fee and receipt.



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



Submit payment starting **January 2nd, 2021.**

Submit payment by: **March 25th, 2021 at 5 pm.**

Submit receipt starting **March 8, 2021 at 12 pm.**

Submit receipt by: **March 25th, 2021 at 5 pm.**

Submit Primary Filing Fee Receipt, Declaration of Candidacy form, and petition signatures together.

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



Submit your payment to the Department of Elections.

Keep a receipt of your payment. Submit the receipt to your district party chair with your Declaration of Candidacy and petition signatures.



As a candidate for Statewide Office, you will pay 2% of the minimum annual salary for the office you seek.

- Governor salary = \$175,000 Filing fee = \$3,500
- Lt. Governor salary = \$36,321 Filing fee = \$726.42
- Attorney General salary = \$150,000 Filing fee = \$3,000

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

- **If you get disqualified or run unopposed** you will get a refund for the primary filing fee.
- **If you withdraw** you can get a refund if the Department of Elections receives your withdrawal notice before the party chair files the Certification of Qualified Primary Candidates form. The deadline for party chairs to file is March 30th, 2021, but they may file sooner.

- 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 8th, 2021 at 12 pm.**

File ending **March 25th, 2021 at 5 pm.**

Independent candidates

File starting **January 2nd, 2021.**

File ending **June 8th, 2021 at 7 pm.**

We 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 **AND**
- The Primary filing receipt (if required)

To

- Primary candidates: The Department of Elections
- All other candidates: The Department of Elections



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.

□ Collect petition signatures and submit the Petitions of Qualified Voters (SBE-506/521) ([letter](#) ; [legal](#) ; [electronic](#)).



Find in Va. Code §§ [24.2-505\(D\)](#), [24.2-506](#), [24.2-507](#), [24.2-521](#), and [24.2-522](#).
 Find in Virginia Administrative Code [1 VAC 20-50-20](#) and [1 VAC 20-50-30](#).
 Check local charters for additional or different requirements.
 Contact the local attorney for guidance.

Primary Candidates	Non-primary party candidates	Independent Candidates
Collect signatures: Saturday, January 2, 2021 through Thursday, March 25th, 2021. <hr/> Submit pages: Monday, March 8th, 2021 at 12:00 pm. through Thursday, March 25, 2021 at 5:00 pm.	You do not need to submit this form.	Collect signatures: Saturday, January 2nd, 2021 through Tuesday, June 8th, 2021 <hr/> Submit pages: Saturday, January 2nd, 2021 through Tuesday, June 8th, 2021 at 7:00 pm
File petition pages to The Department of Elections Paper: hand deliver in sealed containers Electronic: through COMET		File petition pages with the Department of Elections. Paper: mail or hand deliver Electronic: through COMET



For the 2021 election cycle, ELECT has been ordered to produce a petition form that can be signed without a circulator being present and submitted electronically. Only the [electronic](#) form can be submitted electronically.

Completed [electronic](#) petition pages may be submitted electronically through [COMET](#). **Do not email** completed electronic petitions pages to ELECT. Any emailed petition pages will not be accepted. Do not submit the regular letter and legal size petition pages through COMET. They will not be accepted.

You may also print your electronic petition pages and submit them to ELECT through the mail or in-person. To submit your electronic petition pages on paper, you must

present your printed pages in one or more sealed containers. Each container presented must have a written statement under oath by the candidate giving his name and the number of signatures on the petitions contained in the containers.

File along with the Declaration of Candidacy and receipt for Primary Filing fee (if required).

You do not need to submit all signature pages at once. However, the first time you submit petitions, they must be filed with the Declaration of Candidacy.

At the time of filing, independent candidates may request notification of any problems that can be corrected before the filing deadline. Make this request in writing and address it to the Department of Elections.

We will try to get back to you, but cannot guarantee a timely response.

If the Department says that you do not have enough signatures then you can submit an appeal to the State Board of Elections.

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 form from the Department of Elections, 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 his/her 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.

When submitting petition pages remember that...

- Original pages must be submitted in one or more sealed containers. Each container presented must have a written statement under oath by the candidate giving his name and the number of signatures on the petitions contained in the containers.

Office you seek	Number of petition signatures you need from qualified voters
Governor, Lt. Governor, or Attorney General	2,000 signatures, including the signatures of at least 50 qualified voters from each congressional district in the Commonwealth (amounts lowered for 2021 election cycle only)

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

- Fill out and submit [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](#)



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

This does not disqualify you.

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

- 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](#).

How do I withdraw my candidacy?



Find in Va. Code § [24.2-612.2](#)



Submit your written withdrawal to your local [General Registrar's](#) Office. The General Registrar will notify other affected General Registrars and/or the Department of Elections, as appropriate.



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

Qualified Independent Candidate that Wishes to use Third Party ID on the Ballot.



Find in Virginia Code § [24.2-613](#).



File starting **January 2, 2021**.
File ending **June 14, 2021 at 11:59 pm**.

Use this table to learn what, when, and where to file.

	What do I need to file?	Where do I file this letter?	When does filing open?	What is the deadline to file?
1.	<p>A letter signed by the State Chair stating the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 	With the Department of Elections.	Thursday, January 2, 2021.	Monday, June 14, 2021 at 11:59 pm.
2.	<p>A letter signed by the State Chair and signed by the candidate stating the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Chair certifies the candidate is the nominee of the party. The candidate accepts the nomination of the party. 	With the Department of Elections.	Thursday, January 2, 2021.	Monday, June 14, 2021 at 11:59 pm.



Submit these letters to the Department of Elections. Electronic submission of these letters is permissible (ea@elections.virginia.gov).



The Department of Elections recommends that the Independent candidate provide this information to the State Chair of his/her party. This presumably will assure that the party will provide the nominee with what s/he needs to file with the Department of Elections by the appropriate deadline.

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.