



NORTH CAROLINA

STATE BOARD OF ELECTIONS

FACT SHEET: Running for 2021 Municipal Offices

This fact sheet pertains to running for municipal office in 2021, including mayor, city or town council, and others. Not all municipalities will have an election this year. A few municipalities elect their officials in even-numbered years.

1) How does a person's name get on the ballot for the municipal election?

[G.S. § 163-291 \(2\)](#), [G.S. § 163-291 \(2\) \(a\)](#), [G.S. § 163-294.2\(c\)](#), [G.S. § 163-294.2 \(c\)\(1\)](#), [G.S. § 163-107.1](#), [G.S. § 163-296](#), or [G.S. § 163-122 \(a\)\(4\)](#)

- Filing for municipal offices is held at county board of elections offices.
- Candidates must be 21 years old on Election Day. [N.C. Const. Art VI. Sec. 6.](#)
- Candidates must be registered voters of the municipality at the time they file for office. If they are not already registered to vote, they can register at the same time they file their notice of candidacy.
- For an office that is elected by district or ward, the candidate must reside within the district or ward.
- Candidates must file a notice of candidacy with the county board of elections office in the county of their residence and pay a filing fee set by the municipal governing board during the filing period. The minimum is \$5 with a maximum of 1% of the annual salary of the office sought.
- For partisan elections, a candidate must be affiliated with the same political party in which he or she intends to file for at least **90 days** prior to the date the candidate files.
- A person whose name appeared on the ballot in a primary election is not eligible to have their name placed on the regular municipal election ballot as an unaffiliated candidate for the same office in that year.
- The notice of candidacy includes a question about any previous felony convictions and will require disclosure of any convictions.
- A candidate may not file for more than one office in the same election.

2) When is the filing period?

Because 2021 is a year following the federal census, there are two scheduled filing periods by contest type. In 2021, there are two scheduled filing periods for municipal elections by contest type:

- **Municipalities in which there are NO district contests:** Noon on Friday, July 2 to noon on Friday, July 16, 2021.

- **Municipalities in which there ARE district contests:** Noon on Monday, July 26 to noon on Friday, Aug. 13, 2021. *Applies if any office requires residency in a municipal district or ward.
- Some municipalities must redistrict to correct population imbalances, so filing periods and election dates for district-based contests are subject to change as they are contingent on the timeliness of the U.S. Census Bureau releasing data and state and local governments adopting redistricting plans based on that data. Please check the [Running for Municipal Office](#) webpage for any changes to the filing period or election dates for district-based contests.

3) What if a candidate wants to run as unaffiliated?

If a candidate wishes to run unaffiliated, they should review [G.S. § 163-296](#) and [G.S. § 163-122 \(a\)\(4\)](#), and the [fact sheet on running as an unaffiliated candidate](#).

4) What if a candidate wants to run and wishes not to pay the filing fee?

In lieu of paying the filing fee, a candidate may submit a petition signed by registered voters. For more information, see [G.S. § 163-107.1](#).

5) When are the elections?

Three municipal election dates:

- **Tuesday, Sept. 14, 2021**
- **Tuesday, Oct. 5, 2021**
- **Tuesday, Nov. 2, 2021**

6) How are municipal election dates determined?

- They are set according to the election method as outlined by the N.C. General Statutes, a local act of the General Assembly, and/or municipal charters. To learn about election methods, see [Types of Elections: Municipal Elections](#).

7) What are the campaign reporting requirements?

North Carolina law requires tracking and disclosure of all contributions and expenditures in support of your nomination or election, even when the candidate spends only personal funds. The due date of disclosure reports and the forms that must be used will vary by the office you are seeking and your committee's activities. Every candidate is responsible for compliance with campaign reporting laws.

The treasurer of every campaign committee is required by law to receive training in campaign finance reports and law. Since candidates are also required to comply with campaign finance law, it is highly recommended that candidates obtain the training as well. This **mandatory campaign finance training** is available online or in-person at numerous training sessions offered by this agency. Please call our agency's main line at 919-814-0700 and ask to speak with someone from our Training division.