

2026 Independent Candidate Ballot Access

Those candidates who choose to not run as a political party candidate may obtain ballot access by submitting a petition to the Secretary of State, if seeking a state or federal office, or to the Judge of Probate, if seeking a county office. There is no qualifying fee.

For ballot access in the 2026 General Election, the petition must be filed no later than **the date of the primary election, May 19, 2026, by 5:00 p.m.**

For ballot access in special elections, please contact the Secretary of State or the Judge of Probate for the petition deadline.

Signature Requirements

A ballot access petition for an independent candidate must contain signatures of registered Alabama voters. The number of valid signatures on the petition must equal or exceed at least **3 percent** of the qualified electors who cast ballots for the office of governor in the last general election in the political jurisdiction for which the independent candidate is seeking ballot access: statewide, countywide, or district.

Statewide Offices. For the 2026 General Election, an independent candidate seeking ballot access for a statewide office must submit a petition that contains at least **42,458** signatures of registered voters in the State of Alabama.

Federal and State District Offices. For federal and state district offices, such as Congress, Alabama House of Representatives, Alabama Senate, State Board of Education, Circuit Judges, please contact the Secretary of State's Election Division for the required number of signatures of registered voters: 334-242-7210.

Countywide and County District Offices. For countywide offices or county district offices, such as County Commission or County School Board, please contact the county Judge of Probate for the required number of signatures of registered voters

Fair Campaign Practices Act (for non-federal candidates) ...

Independent candidates should be aware of their obligation to file an **Appointment of Principal Campaign Committee Form** within 5 days of the time they submit the ballot access petition or within 5 days of raising or spending more than \$1,000.

Once an independent candidate raises or spends more than \$1,000, then he or she must also file campaign finance disclosure reports beginning with the next scheduled report. To file visit fcpa.alabamavotes.gov

Statement of Economic Interests (for non-federal candidates) ...

Independent candidates must file a **Statement of Economic Interests** with the Alabama Ethics Commission not more than 5 days after he or she submits the ballot access petition. For information on filing the **Statement of Economic Interests**, call the Alabama Ethics Commission (334)242-2997, or visit www.ethics.alabama.gov

Prepared by the Elections Division, Office of the Secretary of State, State of Alabama. This document is not a substitute for the Code of Alabama. This document is provided as a guide and is not intended to be an authoritative statement of law. For further information, please consult the Code of Alabama.

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Petition Requirements

- A statement at the top of the petition that includes the name of the independent candidate, the date of the election, the type of election (e.g., general election or special general election), the name of the political subdivision for which ballot access is sought (such as statewide, county name, or district or place number), and the name of the office sought (including district or place number). Petitions for the establishment of independent candidacy in a special election shall not be required to include the date of the special election at the top of each page. [Alabama Administrative Code, Rule 820-2-4-.05(1)]
- Numbered pages. [Alabama Administrative Code, Rule 820-2-4-.05(1)]
- Requested information for each person signing which includes name, residential address, date of birth and signature. A signature shall not be deemed invalid for lacking any portion of the requested information if the disclosed information is sufficient for determining the validity of a signature. [Alabama Administrative Code, Rule 820-2-4-.05(3)]
- A sample petition form, which may be photocopied, is available from the Office of the Secretary of State and on the Secretary of State's election web site: www.alabamavotes.gov.

Petition Suggestions

- Have the voter sign in ink and write legibly.
- Obtain signatures in excess of required number, as some signatures may not be valid and/or identifiable.
- Keep a copy of the petition.

Petition Filing Locations

Petitions for **state and federal offices** must be filed in the Elections Division of the Office of the Secretary of State, located in the State Capitol, 600 Dexter Avenue, Room E-208 in Montgomery, Alabama.

Petitions for **county offices** must be filed in the office of the **county Judge of Probate**.

Mailing address: **Elections Division**
 Office of the Secretary of State
 PO Box 5616
 Montgomery, Alabama 36103-5616

Telephone: (334) 242-7210 or
(800) 274-VOTE

- ❖ Please note federal candidates are required to file with the Federal Elections Commission (FEC). Please contact the FEC for more information, or visit www.fec.gov

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