

2026 Minor Party/Third Party Ballot Access

Political parties that did not receive 20 percent of the votes cast in the last General Election (§17- 13-40, Code of Alabama, 1975), often called “third parties,” must take the following steps in order to obtain statewide ballot access:

- At least 60 days before each election, file with the Secretary of State an original copy of the party’s emblem and a copy in a digital or other electronic format acceptable by the Secretary of State. [§17-6-29]
- File a certificate of nomination of candidates. A certificate of nomination for state or federal candidates must be filed with the Secretary of State. A certificate of nomination for county candidates must be filed with the local Judge of Probate. Each certificate of nomination must have attached a separate sworn statement from the nominee, signed by the nominee, stating that he or she accepts the nomination. The certificate of nomination is due on or before **5:00 p.m., May 19, 2026**, the date of the primary election. [§§17-9-3(2) and 17-13-52] For ballot access in special elections, please contact the Secretary of State or the Probate Judge for the deadline to file nominations.
- File a petition containing signatures of at least **3 percent** of the qualified electors who cast ballots for the office of governor in the last General Election in the jurisdiction or political subdivision for which ballot access is sought (e.g., statewide, county, district). A petition for statewide ballot access must have **42,458** valid signatures. *The voters signing the petition must be registered to vote in the jurisdiction or political subdivision for which ballot access is sought.*
- 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 web site: www.alabamavotes.gov.
- 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.**, with the Secretary of State to nominate candidates for state or federal offices or with the Judge of Probate for county offices. [17-6-22] For ballot access in special elections, please contact the Secretary of State or the Judge of Probate for the petition deadline.
- Minor party candidates not seeking a federal office are subject to the reporting requirements of the Alabama Fair Campaign Practices Act. Minor party candidates must file an **Appointment of Principal Campaign Committee Form** within 5 days of qualifying with the minor party or within 5 days of raising or spending more than \$1,000, whichever comes first. Additionally, when a minor party candidate raises or spends more than \$1,000, he or she must also begin filing campaign finance disclosure reports beginning with the next regularly scheduled report.
- Minor party candidates not seeking a federal office must also file a **Statement of Economic Interests**, (§36-25-15). The **Statement of Economic Interests** must be filed with the Alabama Ethics Commission not more than five days after the date he or she qualifies with the minor party as a candidate. For information on filing the **Statement of Economic Interests**, call the Alabama Ethics Commission (334) 242-2997.

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.

2026 Independent Candidate Ballot Access

Petition Requirements

- A statement that includes the name of the political party seeking ballot access, the type of election for which ballot access is sought (i.e., general or special), the date of the general election, and the name of the political subdivision for which ballot access is sought or the name of the office for which ballot access is sought, including district or place number, if applicable. Petitions for the establishment of ballot access for a political party 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(2)]
- 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 **statewide ballot access and 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 **countywide and 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

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