

HOW TO RUN FOR MUNICIPAL OFFICE 2025



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City of Boston
Election

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PURPOSE :

The information in this guide is general information regarding the process for running for municipal office in the City of Boston. This information is not intended as legal advice. Please note that deadlines and qualifications contained herein are subject to change if state laws or the City Charter is changed.

Election Procedures outlined in this guide pertain specifically to the City of Boston. If you are considering becoming a municipal candidate in another city or town please contact your local election official for information applicable.



CANDIDATE RESOURCES :

LAWS & REGULATIONS:

Boston City Charter -

Sections 21-33

[PDF version of Boston City Charter](#)

Massachusetts General Laws -

Chapters 50 -56 are available in local libraries and on the internet at:

[Election Laws](#)

Code of Massachusetts Regulations -

950 CMR §46.00 - §60.00

STATE OFFICES:

Secretary of State (Election Division) -

One Ashburton Place, Room 1705

Boston, MA 02108

617-727-2828 or 1-800-462-VOTE

[Secretary of State Web Page](#)

State Ethics Commission -

One Ashburton Place, Room 619

Boston, MA 02108

617-371-9500

The Office of Campaign and Political Finance -

One Ashburton Place, Room 411

Boston, MA 02108

617-979-8300 or 1-800-462-OCPF

www.ocpf.us

ocpf.us/

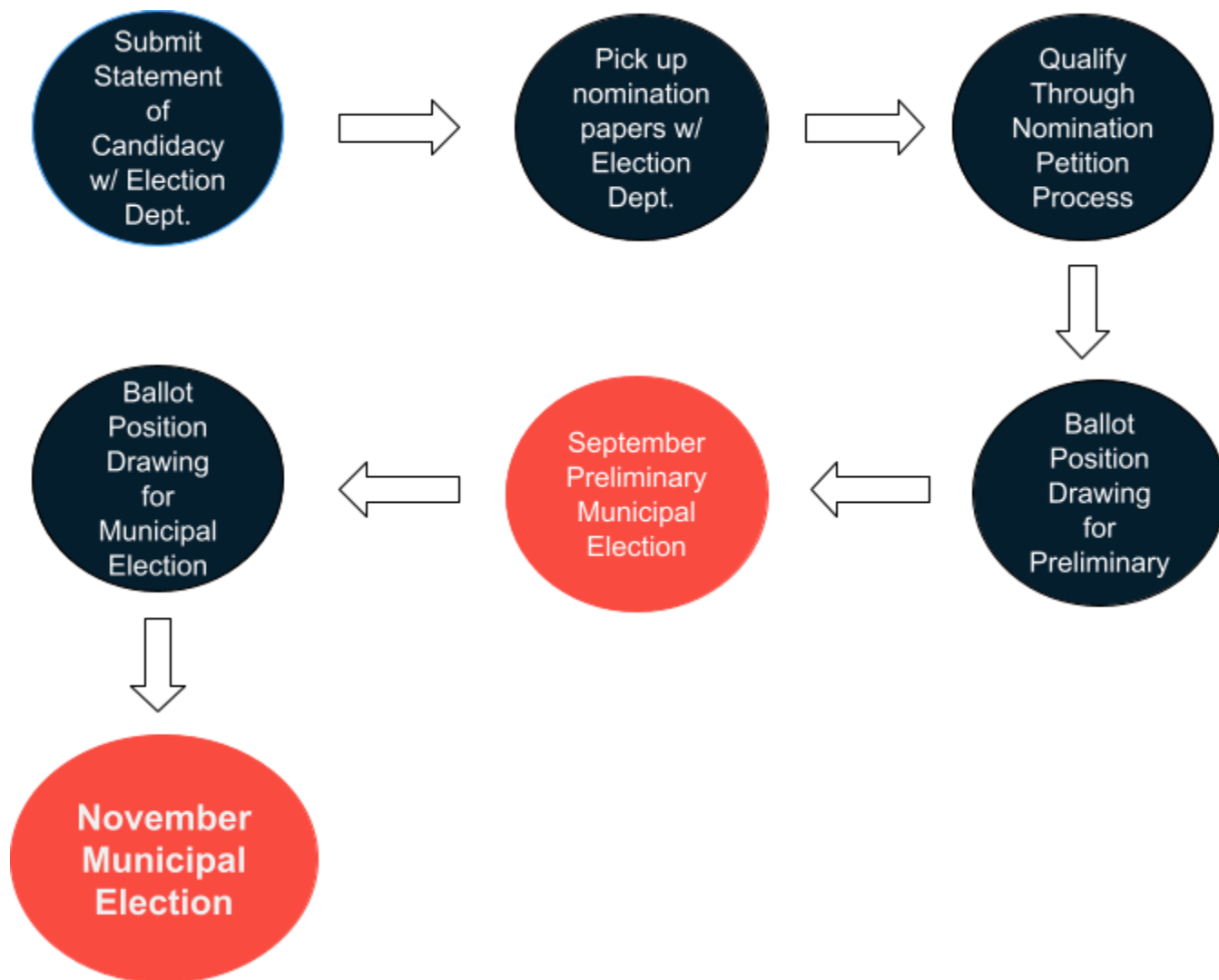


DEFINITIONS :

<i>Board of Election Commissioners</i>	The City of Boston board of election commissioners, which consists of 2 Democratic members and 2 Republican members.
<i>Preliminary Municipal Election (If Required)</i>	This election is held for the purpose of narrowing down the number of candidates whose names shall appear on the official ballot at a municipal election. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ For Mayor office to the top 2. ➤ For District office to the top 2. ➤ For At Large office to the top 8.
<i>Municipal Election</i>	The regular biennial election is held for electing officers of the city which generally follows the Preliminary Municipal Election.
<i>Wards</i>	A combination of precincts.
<i>Precincts</i>	A subdivision of a ward, as for voting purposes.
<i>Districts</i>	Combination of Wards & Precincts.
<i>Chinese Transliteration</i>	The translation into the relevant Chinese characters to represent the phonetic equivalent of the syllables of an English name or a name in a language that is not traditionally written using Chinese characters.



MUNICIPAL ELECTION OVERVIEW :



REMINDER : *State law requires that candidates running for office for any level of government must file with the Office of Campaign & Political Finance.*



MUNICIPAL ELECTION CALENDAR :



April 16, 2025	Begin Accepting Statement of Candidacy. (9AM)
April 30, 2025	Begin distribution of Nomination Petition Forms. (9AM)
May 13, 2025	Deadline for submission of Statement of Candidacy. (5PM)
May 20, 2025	Deadline to Submit Nomination Petition Forms. (5PM)
June 24, 2025	Deadline for Certification of Signatures. (5PM)
July 1, 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deadline for filing withdrawals and objections to nomination of candidates for City Offices. (5PM) • Deadline for filing withdrawals of nomination of candidates for City Offices where Substitutions can be made. (5PM)
July 2, 2025	Deadline for filing substitutions caused by withdrawals or ineligibility. (5PM)
August 30, 2025	Voter Registration Deadline for Preliminary Election
August 30, 31, 2025 September 2-5, 2025	Early Voting for Preliminary Election Sites and times to be determined
September 9, 2025	PRELIMINARY MUNICIPAL ELECTION (7AM-8PM)
October 25, 2025	Voter Registration Deadline for Municipal Election
October 25-31, 2025	Early Voting for Municipal Election Sites and times to be determined
November 4, 2025	MUNICIPAL ELECTION (7AM-8PM)



NOMINATION PETITIONS :

SIGNATURE REQUIREMENTS

CANDIDATES FOR MAYOR	3,000
CANDIDATES FOR CITY COUNCIL AT LARGE	1,500
CANDIDATES FOR CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT 1	200
CANDIDATES FOR CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT 2	200
CANDIDATES FOR CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT 3	200
CANDIDATES FOR CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT 4	200
CANDIDATES FOR CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT 5	200
CANDIDATES FOR CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT 6	200
CANDIDATES FOR CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT 7	200
CANDIDATES FOR CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT 8	200
CANDIDATES FOR CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT 9	200

****The Boston Election Department will certify only up to an additional 20% more than the requirement.****



Nomination Petition Forms

Statement of Candidacy : In order for a Candidate to receive nomination papers, a statement of candidacy must be completed by the Candidate in the Election Department. The candidate **can not** send a representative. On April 16, 2025 beginning at 9AM candidates will be able to submit their statement of candidacy until May 13, 2025 at 5PM. **(Boston City Charter Section 24)**

Nomination Petition Forms : Nomination Petition forms are the forms created by the city for candidates to collect signatures of Boston registered voters in an effort to have a candidate's name printed on the ballot. The nomination petition forms should only be marked in the required areas. Do not make any extraneous markings on the forms. Do not assign your own identifying indicators to the nomination petition forms. **(Boston City Charter Section 24A)**

Committee of Five : On the front page of the nomination petition form, it is optional for a candidate to name a committee of not less than five persons. However, if a candidate has such a committee, it must be listed on all nomination petition forms prior to being circulated to voters. **(Boston City Charter Section 26B)**

Circulators : The Circulator is the person or persons who gather the nominating signatures from the voters. A nomination petition form can have more than one circulator. Each circulator however, must complete the relevant information on the reverse of the nomination petition form. This information can be found in the box directly under the section where the candidate has signed. The circulator must print his/her name and address, sign his/her name, and provide the line numbers for the voter signatures he/she has gathered on the sheet.

Candidate Signature : The candidate must sign the reverse side of every nomination petition form before it is submitted. No other person may sign for the candidate. Rubber stamp signatures are not acceptable. The date next to the signature must also be filled in. **(Boston City Charter Section 24A)**

Filers: The filer is the person who is actually submitting the nomination petition forms to the Boston Election Department on behalf of a candidate's campaign. The filer must sign the nominating petition form they are submitting that day, as well as providing their address. If the candidate is filing the nomination petition forms on their own behalf, only the candidate signature is needed in the filer space. **(Boston City Charter Section 25)**

*****Nomination petition forms can be turned in on a rolling basis, they do not all have to be submitted at one time.*****



SIGNATURE GATHERING

<u>Do's</u>	<u>Don'ts</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Signatures on nomination petition forms must be of voters registered within the City of Boston. ● For District City Council, signatures must be of registered voters within the Candidate's district. ● Voters must sign nomination petition forms on the numbered lines. ● If a signature is not legible, the circulator may ask the voter to print their name on the same numbered line. ● A Voter's signature will only be counted <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Up to 4x's for the office of City Council at large ○ Only Once for the Office of District City Council ● The signatures will be processed in the order received by the Election Department. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● No individual can sign for any person other than themselves. ● Family members cannot sign for their spouses, siblings, children, and parents etc. ● Do not make any extraneous markings on the nomination petition forms. ● Do not assign your own identifying indicators to the nomination petition forms. ● Do not make photo copies of the nomination petition forms.



Candidate Eligibility Requirements

CANDIDATES FOR MAYOR

- Must be a registered voter able to vote for this office.

CANDIDATES FOR CITY COUNCIL AT LARGE

- Must be a registered voter able to vote for this office.

CANDIDATES FOR DISTRICT CITY COUNCIL OFFICES

- Must Be a Registered Voter in the District for which the candidate is seeking to be Elected.
- **Residency Requirement for District City Councillors** - A candidate must reside in the district for one (1) year preceding the Election. For **Election Day November 4, 2025**, candidates must have resided in their district **prior to November 5, 2024. (St. 1982, Chapter 605 Section 6)**

Withdrawals

Candidates may withdraw their name from nomination by submitting a written request signed and duly acknowledged by them. All withdrawals shall be filed with the Boston Election Department at or before 5PM on July 1, 2025 preceding the Preliminary Municipal Election.



BALLOT POSITION DRAWING :

Purpose

The objective of the Ballot Position Drawing is to arbitrarily determine the order in which candidates' names will appear on the ballot. There is a Ballot Position Drawing for the Preliminary Municipal Election and a second Ballot Position Drawing is held after the Preliminary Municipal Election for the Municipal Election. The Election Department will determine a date and location to host the drawing following the deadline for withdrawals and objections.

The Process

- The ballot position drawing will be conducted by the board of Election Commissioners by the drawing of candidates for both district and at large seats, which will take place simultaneously.
- Every Candidate will have the opportunity to be present at the drawing or send a representative on their behalf.
- Each candidate's information will be placed on to a card and announced in alphabetical order before being placed into a receptacle.
- Candidate information will include the office for which they are seeking (name, city council district they reside in, and any statements, if any listed on the nomination paper).
- The information appearing on the card will be displayed on the ballot in the order drawn. **The ballot position drawing is a public forum and is broadcast live on the City of Boston Channel.**



OFFICE OF CAMPAIGN AND POLITICAL FINANCE:

Reporting Contributions and Expenditures

The law requires that campaign expenses and contributions be reported by candidates seeking election at every level of government. Candidates may obtain detailed information on reporting procedures, dates and other guidance regarding the campaign finance law from the Director of the Office of Campaign and Political Finance. The office may be reached at 617-979-8300.

Keep Records Complete

All candidates and political committees must record money or other things of value received from all sources, and all expenditures and disbursements must be reported and detailed records kept. Laws relating to campaign contributions and expenses are quite detailed and explicit and must be followed carefully.

Contact Information

Address - One Ashburton Place, Room 411, Boston, MA 02108

Phone Number : 617-979-8300 or 1-800-462-OCPF

Email - ocpf@mass.gov

Website - <https://www.ocpf.us/>



TRANSLITERATION CALENDAR :

Mandated by the Acts of 2014 Chapter 166

MAY 20, 2025	5:00 PM - Last day and hour for candidates to return transliteration consent form and to file alternative translated/transliterated Chinese names for placement on the ballot for the 2025 Municipal Elections with the Board of Election Commissioners.
MAY 28, 2025	9:00 AM - First day for reviews of translated/transliterated Chinese names for the 2025 Municipal Election by candidates and voters in the City of Boston.
JUNE 5, 2025	12:00 PM - Last day and hour for candidates or voters in the City of Boston to file objections to translated/transliterated Chinese names for the 2025 Municipal Elections with the Board of Election Commissioners.
JUNE 12, 2025	12:00 PM - The Board of Election Commissioners will render decisions concerning any objection raised to translated/transliterated Chinese names. The decisions of the Board of Election Commissioners shall be final.

The Board of Election Commissioners will determine whether to accept a candidate's proposed Chinese name, and whether a candidate's name will appear as a translation or a transliteration, based on the following:

1. Information submitted by the candidate regarding whether or not the candidate has an established Chinese name;
2. Information regarding how the Chinese community refers to the candidate at community meetings and events and in the Chinese Press;
3. Information regarding how the candidate is referred to in campaign materials printed in Chinese;
4. Whether or not a proposed translation or transliteration has another meaning in the Chinese language; and
5. Any other information the Board of Election Commissioners deem relevant in order to prevent voter confusion and to allow for effective participation by the Chinese community in the electoral process.



CANDIDATE REMINDERS:

Your attention is called to the Revised Ordinances of 1961, as amended, Chapter 11, Sections 348, 349, 350, and 368, which read as follows:

Notices and Placards:

No person shall post up or affix in any manner, paint, print, or write, or cause to be painted, printed, or written, a notice, advertisement, or bill, upon a post, pole, fence, wall, or building in the city, unless they have previously obtained the consent of the person having possession of such a post, pole, fence, wall, or building. **(Section 348)**

Removal After Election:

No candidate for any public office shall allow any political notice, advertisement or bill bearing his name to remain posted up or affixed in any manner to a post, pole, fence, tree, wall, building, or other structure in the city beyond thirty days after the election in which he/she was a candidate, without previously obtaining written consent of the person having possession of such a post, pole, fence, tree, wall, building, or other structure. **(Section 349)**

Public Places:

No person shall, without the consent of the Mayor, post up, or affix in any manner, or paint, print, or write, or cause to be painted, printed, or written, a notice, advertisement, or bill, upon a curbstone, sidewalk, tree, telegraph pole, lamp post, or hydrant, in a street or public place, or upon a walk, fence, or building belonging to the city. **(Section 350)**

Penalties:

Any person violating the above provisions shall be punished by a fine, not exceeding twenty dollars for each offense, and not only the person actually doing the prohibited thing, but also his employer and every other person concerned in doing so, shall be punished by such fine. Candidates found in violation of these ordinances will be ticketed by the City of Boston Code Enforcement Division. **(Section 368)**



ELECTION DAY & NIGHT:

Election Day:

The polls are open from 7 A.M. to 8 P.M. Campaigning and electioneering are not allowed within 150 feet of the polling place during voting hours. Prohibited electioneering includes but is not limited to: circulating any petition, soliciting votes, and displaying campaign signs. **Candidates are prohibited from entering any polling location that is not the assigned polling location to vote.**

Election Night:

After 8 p.m., candidates, members of the media, and public are invited to observe the vote tabulation from the “Public Viewing Area” in the Boston Election Department.

Unofficial Election Results:

Unofficial Election Results are available on Boston Election Department’s website at Boston.gov/elections to anyone wishing to monitor returns on Election Night or in the days preceding the Election.

Official Election Results:

Election results will be posted shortly after the election is certified by the Board of Election Commissioners.

