



Ward & Town Committees

2024 Presidential Primaries



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Secretary of the Commonwealth

WARD & TOWN COMMITTEES — 2024

Introduction

Ward and town committees serve as building blocks for political parties in Massachusetts. Voters elect these local party committees every four years at the Presidential Primaries.

In towns, voters in each party elect a single party committee for the entire town. In cities, voters elect party committee members by ward. In addition to serving on ward committees, ward members serve as members of the larger city committee.

Ward and town committees can range from 3-35 elected members. Their duties include:

- Representing the party at local and neighborhood levels
- Promoting party objectives
- Working to nominate and elect party candidates

If you are interested in serving on your local party committee, this guide will explain how to run for this political office in your party's 2024 Presidential Primary.

Number of Elected Seats

Ward and town committees must have at least 3 members, and may have no more than 35 elected members. The number of members to be elected to each local party committee was finalized on August 1, 2023.

- Democratic and Republican ward and town committees that did not notify the Secretary of the Commonwealth's Elections Division of a change in the number of members they wished to elect at the 2024 Presidential Primary by the August 1, 2023 deadline will retain the same number of elected members that they chose to elect in 2020.
- As part of a newly-recognized political party, each Libertarian ward and town committee will automatically be assigned 10 elected members.

Getting Started

Candidates for ward and town committees must circulate nomination papers to appear on the ballot. Candidates may run together as a slate or as individual members.

If you would like to run for ward or town committee, you can either:

- Join an existing candidate slate
- Start your own candidate slate
- Run as an individual candidate

Check if your local committee already has a slate of incumbent and new members. If you are interested in joining this slate, contact the committee's chair.

The Secretary of the Commonwealth's Elections Division will release candidate nomination papers on Tuesday, August 8, 2023. You may pick up these papers from the Elections Division office at One Ashburton Place in Boston, or from select city and town election offices.

If you cannot pick up nomination papers in person, contact the Elections Division at 617-727-2828 to request mail delivery. Papers cannot be provided electronically.

Party Enrollment Requirements

If you wish to run for party ward or town committee, you must be registered to vote in your party at least 90 days before the filing deadline for nomination papers. For the 2024 ballot, this means you must be a registered member of your party as of **August 23, 2023**.

- *Restriction:* if you were enrolled in any other political party within one year of that same filing deadline, you cannot run for a committee seat in your new party. For the 2024 ballot, this means you cannot have been registered with a different political party since **November 21, 2022**.

If you are a new voter in Massachusetts, and you register to vote for the first time after August 23, 2023, you must be an enrolled member of your party as of your registration date.

Running on a Slate vs. Running as an Individual

Candidates who run as a slate will be listed as a group on the ballot. Voters may vote for the entire group with a single vote indicator at the top of the candidate list, awarding one vote to each candidate in the slate. Voters may still vote for individual candidates within a slate, if desired.

If a ballot contains more than one slate, a random drawing will determine the order the slates will be listed. Voters may vote for members of both slates, but they cannot exceed the elected member limit for their town or ward committee.

To form a slate, you must have at least three candidates running together. Three or more candidates listed on the same nomination paper will be treated as a slate.

Candidates with nomination papers listing fewer than three candidates will be listed as individuals.

If you run as an individual, you will be listed separately from any slates on the ballot. Individual candidates are listed after slates on the ballot.

Filling Out Nomination Papers

Party committee candidate nominations require support from at least five registered voters who can vote in that party's presidential primary.

Before gathering voter signatures, make sure you complete all required fields on the nomination papers. These areas are shaded in gray on the front of the papers. Signatures with missing information on nomination papers may be disqualified.

Follow this step-by-step guide below to avoid mistakes:

1. At the top of the front of the nomination paper, **print your city/town name, your ward** (if you are running in a city), **and your political party**.
➤ Note: your ward may have changed since 2020.
2. If you are running a slate of candidates, **confirm the number of candidates your committee may elect**. Too many candidates on your slate will disqualify all candidates.
3. **Print the names and addresses of the candidates** in the columns provided on the front of the paper. Candidate names and addresses should match their voter registrations.

Slate candidates will appear on the ballot in the same order as they appear on the nomination papers. Any individual candidates on the ballot will be listed alphabetically by surname.

- Note: **Confirm each candidate meets party enrollment and residency requirements** before listing their information on the paper.
4. On the back of the nomination paper, **gather signatures from eligible registered voters**. Nominating voters must be registered to vote in the committee's town or ward, and either:
 - Registered in the same party as the committee
 - Not enrolled in any party (including Unenrolled voters)

Gather more than the minimum five signatures, in case any cannot be certified.

You may nominate yourself as a candidate. To nominate yourself, you must sign both sides of the nomination papers—once on the back to nominate, and once on the front to accept the nomination.

5. **Bring the nomination papers to your local election office** for certification no later than **5 p.m. on Friday, November 10, 2023**. Submit early, if possible—this allows time to correct errors or gather additional signatures if needed.
6. **Pick up your nomination papers** when the clerk is finished certifying them. Confirm that at least three registrars have signed in the boxes on the back labelled “Candidate Enrollment Certificate” and “Certification of Voter Signatures.”
7. **Gather written acceptances from each candidate**, next to their name and address on the front of the nomination paper. This must be done before you submit to the Secretary of the Commonwealth’s Elections Division.
8. **Submit your nomination papers to the Secretary of the Commonwealth’s Elections Division** no later than **5 p.m. on Tuesday, November 21, 2023**. Papers can be filed at the Secretary’s offices in Boston, Fall River, and Springfield. Filers are strongly encouraged to submit in person. Any papers lost in the mail, or any that arrive after the deadline, cannot be accepted.

Write-in Candidates

Candidates without accepted nomination papers may choose to run as write-in candidates. However, write-in spaces are only allowed if there are fewer candidates listed on the ballot than the committee’s elected member limit.

A successful write-in candidate must receive enough votes to beat other candidates, and must also receive a minimum of five votes.

After the Election – Organizing

If you win election to your ward or town committee, your local election official will contact you for next steps. Local officials must also send election results to the current party committee chair and the state party committee.

The four-year terms of current ward and town committee members expire 30 days after the Presidential Primaries. Newly-elected members cannot take office until April 4, 2024.

All ward and town committees must meet to organize at some point between April 4 and April 14, 2024. This first organizational meeting involves designation of members, associate members, and officers:

- The committee may appoint members to fill any remaining vacancies after the Presidential Primaries but the committee can only fill vacancies up to its elected member limit.

- For example: if a committee had 35 seats listed on the Presidential Primary ballot, and only 30 members were elected, then the committee can appoint up to 5 members to fill those vacancies.
- Committees may also appoint associate members, who serve two-year terms. Associate members participate in committee business, but cannot vote.
- The committee must also choose 3 officers: chair, treasurer, and secretary. These required offices must be held by 3 separate committee members. The committee may choose to add other officers, at its discretion.
- After the committee chooses its officers, it must file a CPF-101-WTC form with several offices. On this form, the secretary must list the three main officers, as well as any other officers, all other members, and all associate members. The form must be signed by the committee's secretary and treasurer.
- The CPF-101-WTC form must be filed with the Office of Campaign and Political Finance (OCPF). Copies of the form must also be sent to the Secretary of the Commonwealth's Elections Division, your state party committee, and your city or town clerk. Forms may be submitted in person, by mail, or by email, using the contact information below.

**Office of Campaign and
Political Finance**

One Ashburton Place, Room 411
Boston, MA 02108
ocpf@mass.gov

**Secretary of the Commonwealth
Elections Division**

One Ashburton Place, Room 1705
Boston, MA 02108
elections@sec.state.ma.us

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Event	Date*
Deadline for ward/town committees to notify Elections Division of elected candidate limit	Tuesday, August 1, 2023
Nomination papers released for state, ward, and town committee candidates	Tuesday, August 8, 2023
Party enrollment deadline for state, ward, and town committee candidates	Wednesday, August 23, 2023
Deadline to submit state, ward, and town committee nomination papers to local registrars	Friday, November 10, 2023
Deadline for local registrars to certify state, ward, and town committee nomination papers	Friday, November 17, 2023
Deadline to submit state, ward, and town committee nomination papers to Elections Division	Tuesday, November 21, 2023
Deadline to file withdrawals or objections to state, ward, and town committee nominations with the Elections Division	Friday, November 24, 2023
Presidential Primaries	Tuesday, March 5, 2024
Period for new committees to hold first organizational meeting	Thursday, April 4, 2024 – Sunday, April 14, 2024

* Note: All deadlines are at 5 p.m., unless otherwise noted.