

## Primary Election Q & A

### Q. What is a Primary Election?

A. The Primary Election is an election by the political parties to nominate their candidates for the General Election ballot. ***No one is elected in a Primary election***; candidates are *nominated*. In order to win a political party nomination, the candidate must receive more votes than anyone else in their party for that race and receive at least 35% of the votes cast for that office by members of their political party. [39.3(9), 43.1]

### Q. When is the Primary Election held?

A. The Primary Election is held on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in June of even numbered years. [43.7]

### Q. What is a political party?

A. The term "*political party*" shall mean a party which, at the last preceding general election, cast for its candidate for president of the United States or for governor, as the case may be, at least two percent of the total vote cast for all candidates for that office at that election. [43.2]

### Q. What are the political parties in Iowa?

A. Democratic Party and Republican Party. The Auditor conducts two separate elections at the Primary; one for the Democratic Party and one for the Republican Party. There will be two separate ballots at the Primary Election; one for the Democratic Party and one for the Republican Party. [43.31]

### Q. On voter registration applications there is a choice of Green and Libertarian. Why are there no Primary Elections for those parties?

A. In Iowa law, groups that do not meet the requirements of the political party are called "nonparty political organizations (NPPOs)" and they cannot nominate candidates at the Primary Election.

### Q. How would a NPPO become a recognized party?

A. A NPPO has to suffice the following requirements:

1. The organization must have a candidate for governor or president listed on the General Election ballot as a member of their organization.
2. The candidate must receive at least 2 % of the total vote cast for all candidates for that office at that election.
3. The organization must apply to the Secretary of State (SOS) for political party status. The SOS will determine if the organization has sufficed the requirements to become a political party. (To maintain political party status, the party must continue to receive the required votes as outlined above.)

**Q. Why is the Primary Election different from other types of elections?**

A. The difference between Primary Elections and other elections is that a voter's party affiliation must be declared and it must be included on election registers, eligibility slips, absentee ballot requests and absentee ballot affidavits.

**Q. If I am registered as No Party can I still vote in the Primary Election?**

A. Yes you may vote in the Primary Election. You will have to declare one of the two parties in order to cast a ballot. Only voters registered with the Democratic and Republican parties may vote in the Primary Election.

**Q. Can I change my party affiliation at my polling place?**

A. Yes.

**Q. If I declare one party to vote for in the Primary Election can I change back to my previous registration?**

A. Yes, you may change your party affiliation after voting. However, you may not do so the same day as voting. You will need to complete a new voter registration application and mail it to the Story County Auditor's Office. On Election Day the election officials will have voter registration applications available upon request or you may print a voter registration application off of the [Story County Auditor's website](#).

**Q. Who pays for the Primary Election?**

A. The county pays the election costs for the Primary Election.

**Q. What are "Blackout Dates?"**

A. For the three weeks before the Primary Election and three weeks after the Primary Election no special election may be held. No public measures of any kind are allowed to be included on the Primary Election ballot. [[39.2\(1\)\(a\)](#), [43.1](#)]

**Q. Is there satellite voting for the Primary Election?**

A. Story County residents may petition for satellite voting for Primary Elections. A minimum of 100 signatures is required on a petition and it must be delivered to the Auditor by 5 pm at least 47 days before Election Day. [[53.11\(2\)\(a\)](#)]

**Q. Is there a deadline to register to vote for the Primary Election?**

A. The pre-registration deadline is 5 pm 10 days before the Primary Election. [[48A.9](#)]

**Q. Is there opportunity for Election Day Registration (EDR) at the Primary Election?**

A. After the pre-registration deadline, a voter may register to vote and cast an absentee ballot at the same time using the [EDR procedures](#). A voter may only do this at the Auditor's Office or a satellite voting station prior to Election Day. On Election Day the voter may use [EDR procedures](#) at his/her polling location. [[48A.7A](#)]

**Q. Is the Auditor's Office open on Saturdays?**

A. The Auditor's Office will be open the two Saturdays before the Primary Election. The first Saturday is for the pre-registration deadline and the office will be open from 8 am to 5 pm. On the second Saturday, the office will be open for absentee voting and other election related business from 9 am to 5 pm. The office will be open until 5 pm for receiving absentee ballots and affidavit review.

**Q. What is affidavit review?**

A. All absentee ballots received by 5pm on the Saturday before the Primary must have their envelopes opened and their affidavit envelope reviewed for defects and deficiencies. Voters will be notified immediately if any problems are discovered. [53.18(2)]

**Q. What polling places are used for Primary Election?**

A. All 43 Story County [polling locations](#) will be used.

**Q. What hours will the polls be open on Primary Election Day?**

A. [Polling locations](#) will be open from 7 am to 9 pm.

**Q. What offices will be on the Primary ballot in 2010?**

A. **Federal Offices:** U.S. Senator, U.S. Representative. **State Offices:** Governor, Secretary of State, Auditor of State, Treasurer of State, Secretary of Agriculture, Attorney General, State Senator (all odd-numbered seats up in 2010), State Representative (all). **County Offices:** Board of Supervisors (2), County Attorney, County Recorder and County Treasurer.

**Q. Are there offices missing from my Primary ballot?**

A. There are offices that do not appear on the Primary ballot.

- **Gubernatorial election year:** The Lt. Governor is nominated by the state political party convention. [43.123]
- **Presidential election year:** The President/Vice President are nominated at the political party caucuses. [43.4, 54.5]

**Q. If I vote a Democratic ballot, can I write-in a Republican for an office and vice-versa?**

A. Primary election voters are making nominations for their own political parties. A write-in vote for a Republican candidate on a Democratic ballot will be tallied as a Democratic vote, not a Republican vote.

**Q. When will ballots be ready for voting?**

A. Ballots must be mailed, emailed or faxed to [Uniformed and Overseas Citizens' Absentee Voting Act](#) (UOCAVA) voters at least 45 days before the election. Ballots will be mailed to domestic absentee voters as soon as they are ready. Ballots to be voted in-person at the Auditor's Office or satellite voting stations will be ready no sooner than 40 days before the election. [[53.10\(1\)](#), [53.39](#), [MOVE Act](#)] The last day to mail out an absentee ballot is the Friday before Election Day. [[53.2](#)]

**Q. How do I apply for an absentee ballot?**

A. You may use the official Iowa absentee request form located on our website or we can mail you a request form upon request. You may also write a request on a piece of paper no smaller than 3" x 5" with the following required information: Voter's name, registration address, mailing address, date of birth, date and/or name of the election for which the voter is requesting a ballot, political party (Primary Election only) and signature. [Additional information about absentee voting](#).

**Q. When do absentee ballots have to be returned to the Auditor's Office?**

A. The absentee ballots must be clearly postmarked before Election Day and received by the Auditor's Office by noon on the Monday following Election Day. Voters may also deliver their ballots to the Auditor's Office up until 9 pm on Election Day. [[53.17](#), [53.19](#)]

**Q. If I want to be a candidate for the Primary Election, what do I need to do to get my name on the ballot?**

A. A candidate must fill out and circulate nomination papers and collect the required amount of signatures. Nomination papers consist of an [affidavit of candidacy](#) and [nomination petition](#). Nomination papers are prescribed by the [Secretary of State](#) and available on line or also in the Auditor's Office.

**Q. Are there candidate filing fees?**

A. There are no filing fees for any office in the State of Iowa.

**Q. What is the candidate filing period and where do I file my candidate papers?**

A. For State and Federal candidates, your filing period will begin 99 days before the election and end at 5 pm on the 81<sup>st</sup> day before Election Day. You will file your nomination papers with the [Secretary of State](#). For County candidates, your filing period will begin 92 days before the election and end at 5 pm on the 69<sup>th</sup> day before Election Day. You will file your nomination papers with the County Auditor.

**Q. Who can file candidate papers?**

A. Candidates do not need to file papers in person. They may have anyone file the completed forms on their behalf. However, candidates must sign their affidavits of candidacy in the presence of a notary public. Notaries are available in the Story County Auditor's Office.

**Q. Who may sign a nomination petition?**

A. Eligible electors of the applicable county or district may sign the nomination petitions.

**Q. What is an eligible elector?**

A. An eligible elector is a person who meets all of the qualifications to register to vote, but is not required to be a registered voter. There is no limit on the number of nomination petitions one elector may sign.

**Q. I am not registered with a party but I want to run for public office. What are my options?**

A. Nonpartisan candidates will file nomination papers for the [General Election](#). The Primary Election is held to nominate political party candidates to the General Election ballot; therefore, candidates not affiliated with either political party cannot participate in the Primary Election.

**Q. If I file nomination papers at the Auditor's Office for the Primary Election as a partisan candidate and I am actually registered as a No Party, is that a problem?**

A. *Nomination papers are accepted on face value.* The Auditor has no reason to check your voter registration records when papers are filed. However, *someone could file an objection to your nomination papers.* Candidates are required to list the party with which they are registered on Primary Election nomination papers.

**Q. Who can look at filed nomination papers?**

A. Filed nomination papers are public record and may be examined by anyone who wishes to view them.

**Q. How does someone file an objection to filed nomination papers?**

A. Any person who has the right to vote for an office may, before the deadline, file a written objection to the legal sufficiency of the nomination papers. Written objections for federal/state offices must be filed with the [Secretary of State](#) 74 days or more before the Primary Election. Written objections for county offices must be filed with the County Auditor 64 days or more before the Primary Election. [\[43.24\]](#)

**Q. If I change my mind and I do not want my name on the ballot, what do I need to do?**

A. There are withdrawal deadlines for the Primary Election. A written notice of withdrawal must be filed with the [Secretary of State](#) for state and federal offices 76 days or more before the Primary Election. A written notice of withdrawal must be filed with the County Auditor 67 days or more before the Primary Election. [\[43.16\]](#)