

2026 Election Candidate Packet



FOUNTAIN HILLS

Prepared by:
Fountain Hills Town Clerk's Office
16705 E. Avenue of the Fountains
Fountain Hills, AZ 85268

Note from the Town Clerk: This handbook was **revised February 16, 2026 (due to HB2022)** and its emergency clause. Updates will be disseminated as they are received. However, it is the candidate's responsibility to ensure the current forms are used. Any questions regarding completion of forms or interpretation of election laws should be referred to an attorney.



Dear Prospective Candidate:

Thank you for your interest in the Town of Fountain Hills election. The Mayor and six Council Members represent the Town. Elections are regularly scheduled in the fall of even-numbered years. Electors will consider candidates for the Mayor and three Council Members in the **Primary Election, to be held on July 21, 2026**; and if necessary, a runoff election will be held at the **General Election on November 3, 2026**.

Candidates are required to obtain **a minimum of 427 signatures and no more than 855** to have their name appear on the ballot. **Signatures are due between February 21, 2026, and March 23, 2026, by 5:00 p.m.** Candidates are required to schedule an appointment with me to file their nomination papers.

Enclosed you will find the necessary paperwork to open a committee as well as information relevant to the upcoming Election. Please note, that election laws and campaign finance laws are incredibly complex, and the Town Clerk cannot provide legal advice. Candidates are encouraged to consult with an attorney for guidance during your election process.

All candidates must file a Statement of Interest form with the Town Clerk prior to collecting signatures. Once you have received contributions or made expenditures, in any combination, of at least \$500, a Statement of Organization must be filed with the Town Clerk within ten days if it has not already been filed. [[A.R.S. §16-905B](#), [A.R.S. § 16-906](#)]

All forms contained in this packet are available on the [Town Website](#) under Elections. Please make note of the election calendar, which highlights important dates relevant to campaign committees, such as candidate filing periods and campaign finance report due dates.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 480-816-5115 or through email at bbender@fountainhillsaz.gov. or Angela Padgett-Espiritu at 480-816-5107 or through email at aespiritu@fountainhillsaz.gov.

Sincerely,

Bevelyn J. Bender, MMC
Town Clerk
480-816-5115

Angela Padgett-Espiritu
Deputy Town Clerk
480-816-5107

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Section 1 General Candidate Information

OFFICES TO BE FILLED AND TERM LIMITS

Electors will consider candidates for Mayor and three Council Member offices. The Mayor is elected to a two-year term and Council members are elected to four-year terms.

CANDIDATE QUALIFICATIONS

To qualify as a candidate, an individual must be at least eighteen (18) years old, a qualified elector at the time of filing their nomination paper and must have resided in the Town of Fountain Hills for a minimum of one (1) year prior to the date of the election. Please note, that a member of a Town of Fountain Hills Board, Commission, or Committee is not required to resign their position to run for office.

COUNCIL SALARY

Current monthly salaries for Council Members are as follows:

Mayor \$600.00	Council Member \$400.00
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COUNCIL MEETING SCHEDULE

Council meetings are generally held on the first and third Tuesdays of each month at 5:30 p.m. The approved Town Council meeting calendar is posted on the <https://fountainhillsaz.portal.civicclerk.com/>

VICE MAYOR

All Council Members will rotate and serve as Vice Mayor for a term of eight months. The order of rotation is based on the number of votes received in the election (highest to lowest received). If a Candidate(s) wins at the Primary Election, the Candidate(s) will be placed ahead of those who win at the General Election, utilizing the same process as just stated.

EMPLOYEE INVOLVEMENT

Town employee involvement in political activities is set forth in the Personnel Policies, Policy Numbers: 700, Dress Code Guidelines; 703, Outside Activities of Staff; 706, Code of Conduct.

VOTER ASSISTANCE – ADA ASSISTANCE

Contact the Maricopa County Elections Department to arrange for voting assistance at (602) 506-1511, or (602) 506-2348 (TDD). Verbal or written requests can be sent to 510 S. Third Avenue, Phoenix, AZ 85003, please specify the address of confinement if assistance is needed from an Election Board. More information can be found online at <https://elections.maricopa.gov/voting/voter-assistance-services.html>.

VOTER REGISTRATION INFORMATION

To be eligible to vote in an election, residents must be registered to vote at least 29 days before the election. Residents may register to vote online at www.servicearizona.com or by mailing a [Voter Registration Form](#) to Maricopa County Elections, 111 S. 3rd Ave., Phoenix, AZ 85003. Please call 602-506-1511, or 602-506-2348 (TDD) to request a voter registration form be mailed to you.

- ❖ For the **July 21, 2026 Primary Election**, Voter Registration must be accomplished prior to **June 22, 2026, at midnight**.

A person is qualified to register to vote in Arizona if the person:

- Is a United States citizen;
- Will be 18 years old by the date of the next general election;
- Will have been an Arizona resident for at least 29 days prior to the next election, except as provided in [A.R.S. § 16-120 \(A\)](#);
- Can write the resident's name (or make the resident's mark), unless prevented from doing so by physical disability;
- Has not been convicted of treason or a felony, unless their civil rights have been restored; and
- Has not been adjudicated an "incapacitated person" by a court with their voting rights revoked, as defined in [A.R.S. § 14-5101](#).

[Ariz. Const. Art. VII, § 2](#); [A.R.S. § 9-822\(A\)](#); [A.R.S. § 16-101](#); [A.R.S. § 16-126\(A\)](#); [A.R.S. § 16-152](#).

VOTER REGISTRATION UPDATES (RE-REGISTRATION)

It's best practice to check individual voter status annually or at least prior to Elections to ensure the information is correct and correct any information that is not.

A registered voter should update their voter registration record when they move, change their name, or wish to change their political party. Residents may update their registration online at www.servicearizona.com or [Maricopa County Elections - Voter Assistance Services](#).

CIRCULATORS

The petition circulator must be qualified to register to vote in the State of Arizona and, if not a resident of this State, shall register as a circulator with the Secretary of State. Each petition must be signed by the circulator who circulated that petition. The circulator's name shall be typed or printed under their signature along with the circulator's actual residence address. The circulator shall verify that, in their belief, each signed was a qualified elector who resides at the address given as the signer's residence on the date indicated. Candidates can circulate their own petitions. [A.R.S. §16-341](#)

Section 2 Political Sign Information

POLITICAL SIGNS

Obtaining a sign permit is not required for political signs. Political signs may be placed in any zoning district subject to the following guidelines set by State Statute [A.R.S. §16-1019](#). If a sign is located in the Town's right-of-way, please ensure the sign does not create a safety risk. Signs must be located at least 1-foot behind the sidewalk. If no sidewalks exist, signs must be located at least 5 feet behind the curb or 5 feet behind the edge of the pavement if no curb exists.

Notwithstanding any other statute, ordinance or regulation, the Town of Fountain Hills will not remove any political sign if the following conditions are met during the permitted time period:

1. The sign is placed in a public right-of-way that is owned or controlled by that jurisdiction.

2. The sign supports or opposes a candidate for public office, or it supports or opposes a ballot measure.
3. The sign is not placed in a location that is hazardous to public safety, obstructs clear vision in the area, or interferes with the requirements of the Americans with disabilities act (42 United States Code sections 12101 through 12213 and 47 United States Code sections 225 and 611).
4. The sign has a maximum area of sixteen square feet, if the sign is located in an area zoned for residential use, or a maximum area of thirty-two square feet if the sign is located in any other area.
5. The sign contains the name and telephone number, or website address of the candidate or campaign committee contact person.

ARIZONA 811 - POLITICAL SIGNS INSTALLATION

Installing political signs without having utilities marked in advance is a violation of [A.R.S. §40-360.22](#). This law is enforced by the Arizona Corporation Commission which can issue citations for civil penalties of up to \$5,000 per violation. Knowing the location of buried lines, pipes, and cables – and then carefully working around them – prevents serious injuries and protects critical utilities. Visit www.arizona811.com/politicalsigns for more information.

For more information regarding the installation of signs, please see the Town's [Election Webpage / Temporary Election Sign Regulations](#).

Section 3 Candidate Filing Information

1. [Statement of Interest](#)

All candidates must file a Statement of Interest form with the Town Clerk's Office **prior** to collecting signatures. The Statement of Interest form is not connected to a political committee but rather, a statement declaring the candidate's interest in running for office.

The following documents (2-4) shall be filed with the Town Clerk's Office during the candidate filing period. The candidate filing period is **February 21, 2026, through March 23, 2026 by**

5:00 p.m. An appointment with the Town Clerk is required to file your nomination papers.

2. Nonpartisan Nomination Petition Signature Sheet

All potential candidates are required to obtain **no less than 427 and no more than 855 signatures** for their name to appear on the ballot. Petitions should be signed by qualified voters of the Town of Fountain Hills. You may use the [Candidate Petition Sample](#) online to personalize your Candidate Petition Signature Sheets or use the Secretary of State E-Qual online petition portal. Use of this portal is authorized by [A.R.S. §16-317 \(A\)](#).

- Do the petitions contain at least the minimum number of signatures required? If the petitions do not contain the minimum number of signatures, the nomination paperwork cannot be accepted.

A citizen wishing to challenge the validity of the nominations petitions or the candidates' qualifications must do so by 5:00 pm on the 10th business day after the last day of the filing period by filing a court action with Maricopa County Superior Court. The Superior Court shall hear the action within ten days of the filing. It is the duty of the Courts and not the Town Clerk to determine legal sufficiency of candidate nomination petitions. The Town Clerk is only required to determine that the nomination petitions are substantially in regular form and contain the required number of signatures pursuant to [A.R.S. §16-351](#), [A.R.S. 16-315](#), and [A.R.S. §16-322\(A\)](#). The Town Clerk does not have the authority to determine whether signers of nomination petitions are qualified electors.

A person who has signed a petition for any candidate nomination may withdraw the person's signature from the petition not later than 5:00 p.m. on the date the petition is actually filed. [[A.R.S. §19-113](#)]

3. Candidate Nomination Paper Declaration of Qualification

All potential candidates shall file a Candidate Nomination Paper Declaration of Qualification declaring their qualifications.

- Has every question and blank been completed and does the candidate's name appear exactly as it should be printed on the ballot? The candidate's last name must appear first. Nicknames are permissible if they do not suggest a title. [[A.R.S. §16-311\(G\)](#)]

4. Financial Disclosure Statement

All potential candidates shall file a Financial Disclosure Statement covering the 12-month period preceding the date of filing of nomination paperwork. This information is a public record and is posted on the Town's website. See [Resolution 2016-40](#) as a resource.

- Does your form cover the 12-month period preceding the filing date?

Section 4 Political Committee Filing Information

1. Statement of Organization

Although it is not currently required, it is highly recommended that all potential candidates open a political committee if they intend on spending or receiving at least \$500 (in any combination). To open a political committee, a Statement of Organization should be filed with the Town Clerk's Office.

A Statement of organization must be filed with the Town Clerk's Office within ten days of receiving contributions or making expenditures, in any combination, of at least \$500. [[A.R.S. §16-905B](#), and [A.R.S. § 16-906](#)]

2. Campaign Finance Report

Campaign finance reports shall be filed with the Town Clerk's Office during the filing periods. The filing periods can be found in the Campaign Finance Report.

The Arizona Secretary of State's Office has published a [Campaign Finance Handbook](#) to guide candidates through the campaign finance reporting process.

Current Campaign Contribution Limits per election cycle can be found online at the Arizona Secretary of State's Office website.

Campaign Finance Trainings are available through the Maricopa County Recorder's Office or the Arizona Secretary of State's Office. Contact the offices below for more information:

Maricopa County Recorder's Office

510 S. South Third Avenue

Phoenix, Arizona 85003

(602) 506-1511

[Running for Office](#)

Secretary of State's Office - Elections Division

1700 West Washington Street, 7th Floor

Phoenix, Arizona 85007

(602) 542-8683

[Arizona Clean Election Candidate Webpage - Run For Office](#)

3. Termination Statement

To terminate a committee, the committee treasurer shall file a termination statement along with a Final Campaign Finance Report showing a zero balance with the Town Clerk's Office. After a termination statement is filed, a committee is no longer required to file campaign finance reports. [[A.R.S §16-934](#)]

Section 5

Important Dates – 2026 Election Calendar

CAMPAIGN FINANCE REPORTING DUE DATES [[A.R.S. §16-927](#)]

Campaign finance reporting periods can be found on the [Campaign Finance Report](#).

July 21, 2026, PRIMARY ELECTION

Event	Deadline	Statutory Reference
Cumulative 2025 Campaign Finance Report: Jan. 1, 2025 (or from the last report if the Committee skipped the 2024 cycle) to Dec. 31, 2025	January 15, 2026	A.R.S. § 16-927 (C)
Quarter 1 Campaign Finance Report: Jan. 1, 2026 to Mar. 31, 2026	April 15, 2026	A.R.S. §16-927 (A & B)
First Day to File as a Candidate	February 21, 2026	150 days prior to the election A.R.S. §16-312 (A & B)
Last Day to File as a Candidate	March 23, 2026 @ 5:00 p.m.	120 days prior to the election A.R.S. §16-311(B)
First Day to Install Political Signs in ROW	May 11, 2026	71 days prior to the election A.R.S. §16-1019
Last Day to File as a Write-In Candidate	May 22, 2026 @ 5:00 p.m.	60 days prior to the election A.R.S. §16-312.B & SB1153
Last Day to Register to Vote	June 22, 2026 @ midnight	29 days prior to the election A.R.S. §16-120
First Day to Cast an Early Ballot & Ballots Mailed	June 24, 2026	27 days prior to the election A.R.S. §16-542(C) A.R.S. §16-544(F)
Last Day to Request Early Ballot	July 10, 2026	A.R.S. §16-542(E)
Quarter 2 Campaign Finance Report: Apr. 1, 2026 to June 30, 2026	July 15, 2026	A.R.S. §16-927 (A&B)
ELECTION DAY!!	July 21, 2026	A.R.S. §16-201 - 204
Last Day to Remove Political Signs for Candidates NOT Advancing to the General Election	August 5, 2026	15 days after the election A.R.S. §16-1019
Post-Primary Election Campaign Finance Report: July 1, 2026 to July 21, 2026	August 5, 2026	A.R.S. §16-927 (A & B)
Canvass of Election	August 6, 2026 (Tentative)	A.R.S. §16-642 *Deadline Aug. 20, 2026

Section 5 Important Dates – 2026 Election Calendar *(continued)*

NOVEMBER 3, 2026, GENERAL ELECTION (Run-off, if necessary)

Event	Date	Statutory Reference
Write-in Candidate Nomination Papers	September 4, 2026 @ 5:00 p.m.	A.R.S. §16-312(B) SB 1153
Last Day to Register to Vote	October 5, 2026 @ midnight	29 Days Prior to the election A.R.S. §16-120 (A)
First Day to Cast an Early Ballot & Ballots Mailed	October 7, 2026	27 Days Prior to the election [A.R.S. §16-542.C] A.R.S. §16-544(F)
Quarter 3 Campaign Finance Report: July 22, 2026 to Sept. 30, 2026	October 15, 2026	A.R.S. §16-927 (A & B)
RUNOFF/GENERAL ELECTION	November 3, 2026	A.R.S. §16-204 A.R.S. § 16-211
November Post Primary Report Oct. 1, 2026 to Nov. 3, 2026	November 18, 2026	A.R.S. §16-927 (A & B)
Last Day to Remove Political Signs	November 18, 2026	15 Days After the election A.R.S. §16-1019
Canvass of Election	November 17, 2026	A.R.S. §16-642 *Deadline Nov. 23, 2026
Quarter 4 Election Campaign Finance Report: Nov. 4, 2026 to Dec. 31, 2026	January 15, 2027	A.R.S. §16-927 (A & B)

ELECTION INFORMATION

At the **July 21, 2026 Primary Election**, the candidates receiving the highest number of majority votes equal to the number seats to be filled are declared elected to office. No further election is held unless no candidate receives a majority of votes cast or an insufficient number of candidates receive a majority of votes cast pursuant to [A.R.S. §9-821.01](#).

If there is any office where no candidate was elected at the **July 21, 2026 Primary Election**, a Runoff/General Election will be held on **November 3, 2026**.

The candidates equal in number to the seats to be filled for the office who receive the highest number of votes in that Runoff/General Election are declared elected to that office. A write-in candidate may not advance to the runoff election if the write-in candidate did not receive a number of votes equivalent to at least the same number of signatures required by [A.R.S. §16-322\(10\)](#) for nominating petitions for the same office.

Section 6 List of Forms Provided

Form Name	
Paper Form Provided	
1.	Council Rules of Procedure (Res. 2026-02)
2.	Statement of Interest
3.	Nonpartisan Nomination Paper
4.	Nonpartisan Nomination Petition Sample
5.	Financial Disclosure Statement
6.	Financial Disclosure Statement Guide
7.	Resolution 2016-40 Financial Disclosure
8.	Statement of Organization
9.	Campaign Finance Report Form
10.	Termination Statement
11.	2025-2026 Contribution Limit Chart
12.	Resolution 2025-06 – Political Sign Free Zone
13.	Sign Code Requirements during the Election (71 days prior to PE/15 days after the PE for candidates not running in the GE and after the GE)
14.	Campaign Finance Candidate Guide
15.	Campaign Finance PAC Guide
16.	E-Qual Candidate Guide
17.	Circulator Guide
Web Links	
18.	Arizona Clean Elections Candidates Page
19.	Maricopa County Elections – Running for Office
20.	Arizona Secretary of State’s Office – Election Division
21.	Arizona Revised Statutes