

UNDERSTANDING ELECTIONS

Types of Elections

There are three types of elections: Municipal, Primary and General elections. The following information will describe each type.

Municipal Election

An election held for towns, cities or other special districts. Only residents of these municipalities and districts are eligible to vote in these elections. These elections are held in odd-numbered years.

General Election

A General Election is defined as a partisan election in which candidates are elected. All registered voters are eligible to vote in a general election. General elections are held in even-numbered years.

General elections are held for the following offices:

- U.S. President / Vice President*
- U.S. House Of Representatives (Congress)
- North Carolina State House and State Senate officials
- County Officials (e.g., County Commissioners)
- Municipal Officials (e.g., mayor, council members)**
- School Board

General elections also may include bond proposals and referenda.

* Four-year general elections (based on presidential election year).

** Municipal officials will be elected in 1999 general elections and every two years thereafter.

Registered voters may vote for candidates in either party, regardless of their declared party affiliation.

Primary Election

A Primary is defined as an election which nominates candidates to the ballot for the General Election. The nominees of each party are then placed on the ballot for general election. Primary elections are held in even numbered years prior to the general election.

A Primary Election is held to nominate a candidate to represent a political party in the General Election. Primary elections are held for the following offices:

- U.S. House Of Representatives (Congress)

- Governor and other North Carolina officials such as:
 - Lieutenant Governor
 - Attorney General
 - Secretary Of State
 - State Auditor
 - State Treasurer
 - Superintendent Of Public Instruction
 - Commissioner Of Labor
 - Commissioner Of Insurance
 - Commissioner Of Agriculture
- North Carolina State House and State Senate officials
- County Officials (e.g., County Commissioners)
- Municipal Officials (e.g., mayor, council members)

Registered voters may vote ONLY in the primary election of their declared party. If a voter is registered as "unaffiliated", he/she may vote in either the Republican or Democratic primary election.

POLITICAL PARTY

An organization of voters which supports a political view, and is recognized by the State Board of Elections.

NON-PARTISAN

An election where candidates do not run as a nominee of a political party. Judicial elections are non-partisan as well as most municipal elections.

PARTISAN

An election where the candidates must be a nominee of a recognized political party or otherwise qualify.

UNAFFILIATED

Choice to not register with a political party.

ONE-STOP VOTING

Voting in the designated time frame, in person, prior to Election Day.

NO-EXCUSE VOTING

No longer needing an excuse to vote by mail or One-Stop method.

NEAR RELATIVE

By election law, spouse, parent, grandparent, child, grandchild, sibling, stepchild, in-law (father, mother, son or daughter).