



Introduction to Elections in Virginia

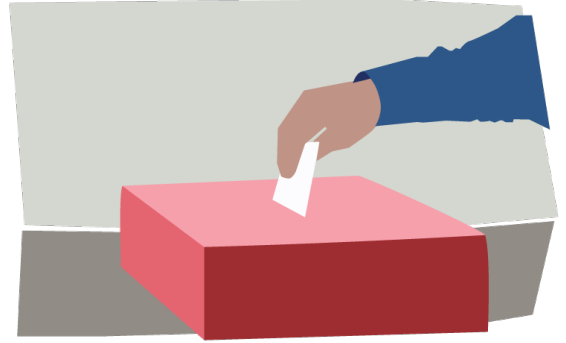
Topics Covered:

- Election Administration
- Types of Elections

Election Administration

Local Administration of Elections - Elections are administered at the local level in Virginia. Each county and independent city is considered a political 'locality' and administers its own elections. Localities administer elections through the:

- **Local Electoral Board** - The local electoral board has overarching responsibility to administer elections for a county or city. It appoints both the general registrar and officers of election for the locality.
- **General Registrar's office** - The general registrar maintains an office in the locality, and performs most administrative duties, most notably, voter registration.
- **Officers of Election** - Officers of election work the polls on Election Day. These are the people voters see and interact with when voting.



State Entities - While elections are administered locally, two state bodies provide oversight and regulation:

- **The State Board of Elections** - The State Board of Elections is an administrative decision-making body for elections at the statewide level. Decisions made by the State Board can affect the conduct of elections statewide.
- **The Virginia Department of Elections** - The Department of Elections supervises and coordinates the work of local electoral boards. It also provides training and guidance to electoral board members and general registrars. The agency manages a centralized database of voter and election related information.

Legal Requirements for Fair, Legal & Uniform Elections

Voter registration and elections must be administered in a fair, legal and uniform manner across the state. Localities must adhere to federal, state and local laws and regulations.

Types of Elections in Virginia:

General Elections - General elections fill offices for elections regularly scheduled by law. Regularly scheduled elections include those for federal, state and local offices such as the U.S. Congress, statewide and local offices such as those of the Governor, State Senator, Sheriff, School Board, and many more.

Special Elections – Special Elections are held for unexpired terms and referenda. Also, if someone cannot complete their entire term of office a Special Election is held to fill the seat. Special elections may also be held to decide the outcome of a referendum on the ballot. Special elections can be held on the same day as regularly scheduled General Elections.

Primary Elections - Primary elections determine which candidates will be the nominees of Virginia political parties to appear on the ballot in a future general election. Primary elections do not fill any offices. In Dual or Multiple Primaries, two or more parties' primaries are held on the same day. Virginia law permits a voter to vote in either primary, but in only one held on the same day.