



# Running for Local Office

## 2026



Provided by the Office of the City Clerk  
City of Vista, California  
200 Civic Center Drive  
Vista, CA 92084  
760.643.5320

# Running for Local Office

The following information is intended to assist residents who are considering a run for local office. This guide is not all-encompassing and only summarizes the basic requirements to establish candidacy.

There are five elected positions in Vista. On June 13, 2017, the City Council adopted an ordinance establishing and implementing By-District Elections and a map setting the boundaries for each of the four districts. Four council members are elected by voters that live in the district in which the candidate also lives and a Mayor is elected from the city at-large. Following each Census, the City is required to go through a redistricting process. This process was completed in April, 2022.

General Municipal Elections are conducted every even-numbered year and are consolidated with the State General Election held on the first Tuesday following the first Monday of November. The next General Municipal Election will be held on November 3, 2026, for City Council Member seats in Districts 1 & 4 and for Mayor.

## General Qualifications

### ***Age & Citizenship***

A candidate must be 18 years of age and a citizen of the state (Government Code § 1020).

### ***Residency***

A candidate must be a resident and registered voter of the district for which they intend to run at the time nomination papers are issued by the City Clerk to run for a seat on the City Council and must remain a resident of that district.

Candidates for Mayor must be a resident and registered voter of the City of Vista at the time nomination papers are issued by the City Clerk to run for the seat (California Elections Code §201).

### ***Conviction of Crimes***

A person is disqualified from holding any office upon conviction of designated crimes as specified in the Constitution and the laws of the State of California (Government Code §1021).

## Getting Started Early

***Visit the FPPC's Campaign Section on their website.***

Become familiar with the [Fair Political Practices Commission \(FPPC\) website](#).

Review the [FPPC Disclosure Manual 2](#) – Information for local candidates and their primarily formed committees.

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## ***File FPPC forms with the City Clerk and Secretary of State***

[File Form 501](#) - Candidate Intention Statement before receiving contributions or spending any of your own funds (file with City Clerk).

Set up a bank account for your committee with a bank that has a Vista location.

[File Form 410](#) - Statement of Organization within ten days of receiving \$610 in contributions, or earlier (file the original with the Secretary of State and a copy with the City Clerk).

Forms may be obtained in hard copy from the City Clerk or electronically from the FPPC's website (links above).

## ***Be aware of Vista's local contribution limit and other aspects of Vista's Municipal Codes related to elections***

The City of Vista has a local contribution limit of \$610 ([Vista Municipal Code §2.34.030](#) and [§2.33.040](#), and [Resolution No. 2025-25](#)). Familiarize yourself with both sections of the Vista Municipal Code.

## ***Be aware of the Levine Act (Government Code 84308)***

The Levine Act (Government Code 84308) is a California law aimed at preventing "pay to play" practices by prohibiting parties, participants, and their agents in a proceeding involving a license, permit, or other entitlement from contributing more than \$250 to an officer of the City during a 12-month period.

## **After Candidate Nomination Period Opens**

### ***Schedule an appointment with the City Clerk***

The City Clerk will review the Candidate Filing Guide and issue nomination papers from July 13 to August 7, 2026. The filing period for the respective district, or Mayoral seat, will be extended to August 12 if the incumbent does not turn in nomination papers to run for office.

## **Prior to Close of Nomination Period**

### ***Schedule an appointment with the City Clerk to submit required documents and filing fee(s)***

Submit the following:

1. A valid nomination paper. It must contain the signatures of at least 20, and no more than 30, registered voters who individually sign and write the street address of their residences. For district candidates, signers must be registered voters in the district for which the candidate is running.
2. A \$25 non-refundable filing fee.

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3. A Candidate's Statement of Qualifications is optional. If you choose to submit a statement to be printed in the Registrar of Voter's Information Pamphlet, a deposit (to be determined the Registrar of Voters for individual cities closer to the 2026 election) is required at the time of filing. The statement may contain the name, age, and occupation of the candidate and a brief description of the candidate's education and qualifications. *This cost is only an estimate provided by the Registrar of Voters and the actual cost may require additional billing or refund following the election.*
4. [FPPC Form 700](#)– Statement of Economic Interests (disclosing investments, interests in real property and income).
5. Ballot Designation Worksheet.

## Throughout the Campaign

### **Record Keeping**

During the course of the campaign, candidates and their campaign committee must keep all receipts for expenditures, detailed records of mass mailings, and detailed information about the source of contributions.

### **Campaign Disclosure Statements**

Candidates receiving or spending \$610 or more during the campaign will be required to file periodic campaign disclosure statements in accordance with Vista Municipal Code § 2.34.090 and State law, as follows:

Semi-Annual Campaign Statements

**Due 31 days after the end of the period**

(January 1 – June 30 and July 1 – December 31)

**September 24, 2026**

Pre-Election Campaign Statement due covering  
July 1, 2026 – September 19, 2026

**October 14, 2024**

20<sup>th</sup> Day Pre-Election Campaign Statement due  
covering  
September 20, 2024 – October 9, 2026

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## October 22, 2026

Pre-Election Campaign Statement due covering  
October 10, 2026 – October 17, 2026

## October 28, 2026

6<sup>th</sup> Day Pre-Election Campaign Statement due  
covering  
October 18, 2026 – October 23, 2026

## Election Day and Days that Follow

**November 3, 2026**

Vote! Polls open from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

**Voting Results  
Registrar of Voters (ROV)**

Initial results will be posted on the [ROV website](#) shortly after polls close. The ROV will continue providing periodic updates until all ballots are counted.

**December 8, 2026**

The City Council members elected for Mayor and Districts 1 and 4 will be sworn in and seated for terms ending December 2030.

**January 7, 2027**

FPPC Form 700 - Statements of Economic Interests Due for Assuming and Leaving Office.

**January 31, 2027**

FPPC Form 460 – Campaign Statements due.

**January 31, 2027  
~ Unsuccessful Candidates**

To use money remaining in the Campaign Committee Account for a future election, a candidate must file a new Candidate Intention Statement, Form 501, and amend the Statement of Organization, Form 410, to reflect the new campaign where funds will be applied. If the candidate has no remaining campaign funds and does not plan to run for a future election, a committee termination, Form 460, should be filed with the City Clerk.

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## Resources

### ***City Clerk***

Kathy Valdez  
[kvaldez@vista.gov](mailto:kvaldez@vista.gov)  
760-643-5320

### ***San Diego County Registrar of Voters (ROV)***

[San Diego County ROV website](#)  
858-505-7260

### ***Secretary of State***

[www.sos.ca.gov/elections](http://www.sos.ca.gov/elections)  
916-657-2166

### ***Fair Political Practices Commission (FPPC)***

[Fair Political Practices Commission \(FPPC\)](#)  
[advice@fppc.ca.gov](mailto:advice@fppc.ca.gov)  
866-ASK-FPPC (866-275-3772)