



Frequently-Asked Questions

Durham County March 2020 Primary Election

Q1. Is photo ID required to vote now?

A. No. Due to a recent federal court injunction, a hold has been placed on the requirement for voters to show proof of identification for the March primary election. This hold is effective until further notice from the courts. Certain first-time voters may still be required to present photo identification under federal law.

Q2. What will be on the ballot in the March 2020 Primaries?

A. The contests on the ballot for the March primary include federal offices (President, US Senate, and US House), state offices (Governor, Council of State offices and NC Senate), and local offices (County Commissioner, and School Board).

Durham Public Schools' Board of Education offices (At-Large and Consolidated Districts A & B) will not have a primary election. Instead they will have their general election on March 3rd.

To find out what contests will be on your ballot, visit our website at www.dcovotes.com.

Q3. When are elections scheduled in 2020?

A. Across the State of North Carolina, a partisan primary is scheduled to be held on Tuesday, March 3rd. If necessary, a run-off (also called a second primary) could be held on either Tuesday, April 21st or Tuesday, May 12th. The General Election will be held on Tuesday, November 3rd. On Election Day, polls are open from 6:30 a.m. until 7:30 p.m.

There are no primaries for Durham School Board or Durham Soil and Water seats. The Durham School Board will have its general election during the March 3rd elections, while the Soil and Water District will have their general election on November 3rd. Candidate filing for Durham Soil and Water will run from noon on Monday June 8th to noon on Monday, July 6th.

Q4. Am I in a new district for US Congress, NC Senate, or NC House?

A. Recent court orders have caused US Congressional and NC House and Senate maps in North Carolina to be changed. In Durham County, no voters were affected by the NC House and NC Senate map adjustments made since 2018. All Durham County voters are now in US Congressional District 4. The US Congressional District 1 seat is no longer within the boundaries of Durham County.

Q5. How does the primary work?

A. The majority of the offices on the March 3rd ballot are partisan primary contests. This means that voters select party nominees to appear on the General Election ballot in November. In some cases, not enough candidates filed to even need a primary to determine the party nominee, in which case those candidates would automatically advance to the General Election for their respective parties and wouldn't appear on the primary ballot. Currently, the recognized political parties in North Carolina are the Democratic, Republican, Libertarian, Constitution, and Green parties.

Q6. Why aren't all of the offices up for election on my primary ballot?

A. Only those offices where more candidates filed for the number of open seats in a contest within the same party will have an election during the March 3rd primary. For example, there are five seats up for election on the Durham Board of Commissioners. If five Republicans filed to run and six Democrats filed to run for that office, the Democratic ballot would have a primary to narrow their candidates down to five (which would match the number of open seats for the contest). Republican ballots would not have this contest on their ballot.

Q7. I'm registered as a voter affiliated with a political party. Do I get a choice in which ballot I vote for in the March 3rd primary?

A. No, being affiliated with a political party means that you may only vote that party's primary ballot. If you do not wish to vote for the candidates of the party you are currently registered with, you must update your voter registration to reflect a change of party prior to the voter registration deadline which is 25 days prior to the election (Friday, February 7th).

Q8. I'm registered as an unaffiliated voter. Do I get a choice in which primary I participate in?

A. Yes. In North Carolina, all of the political parties, excluding the Green and Constitution parties, open up their primary to unaffiliated voters. This means that when appearing to vote, an unaffiliated voter will have a choice of one of the eligible party ballots or a nonpartisan ballot that would only include the Board of Education contests. The only exception to this is that 17-year-old unaffiliated voters will not be eligible to vote on the Board of Education contests because those contests are considered general elections and you must be 18 to vote in a general election.

Q9. I need to update my voter registration/register to vote for the election, what do I do?.

A. Complete a [Voter Registration Form](#) to register to vote or update your voter registration. This must be done 25 days prior to the election: Friday, February 7th. If you miss the voter registration deadline and you are not registered, you can elect to complete a Same-Day Registration during the One-stop Early Voting period. For more information about the Same-Day Registration process, [click here](#).

You may also update your name and address during the One-stop Early Voting period and on Election Day. However, **you cannot change** your party affiliation during early voting. Party changes **must be completed prior to** the voter registration deadline. If you wait until Election Day to update your address, you may have to travel to more than one polling place to complete the process of updating your address. In order to save time, it is best to make all updates to your voter registration either prior to the voter registration deadline or during early voting.

If you are not sure whether you are registered to vote in Durham County, or simply need to verify your voter registration is current and up to date, you can use the [voter lookup tool provided by the State Board of Elections](#).

Q10. Can I vote before Election Day?

A. Yes! [See this flyer](#) with information and schedules for early voting for the March Primary. Another option is to request a mail-in absentee ballot. ([See here for more information about absentee voting by mail.](#))

Q11. How can I find the closest early voting location to me? / Where do I vote on Election Day?

A. Our office has an [online tool](#) that can provide driving directions to early voting sites and help you determine the closest and most convenient location for you. Just enter in your address and the tool will locate sites within a radius of that address. This application also provides directions from your location to the early voting site selected. Photos of the early voting site you choose, and other information is available through this tool as well.

Check the [voter lookup tool](#) to confirm your Election Day polling place for the address you currently reside at.

Q12. Can I vote early at my polling place?

A. Not unless your polling place also happens to be one of the early voting sites that are open for this election. Your Election Day polling place is based on the address where you reside. Durham County is divided into 57 precincts. To find your polling place, use the State Board of Elections [polling place lookup tool](#).

Q13. I'll be turning 18 years old after March 3, 2020, but before the General Election on November 3, 2020. Can I vote in the primary?

A. Yes! State law allows 17 year-olds who turn 18 years old by the date of the General Election to participate in the primary. Eligible 17-year olds will be assigned a ballot that does not include Board of Education, because that is a general election occurring in March and not a primary.

Q14. Can I still vote in-person if I have difficulty walking into the voting site due to age or disability?

A. All voting sites, whether they are early voting sites or Election Day polling places, offer “curbside voting,” where voters can pull up to the front of the voting site and election officials will bring the ballot to the voter. In order to vote curbside, a voter must sign an affidavit stating that because of age or physical disability and physical barriers encountered at the voting place, the voter is unable to enter the voting enclosure to vote in person without physical assistance.

Q15. I'm the driver of a vehicle bringing a voter to a voting site to vote curbside. Can I also vote curbside?

A. Only if you can also truthfully sign an affidavit attesting to qualification due to age or physical disability and physical barriers encountered at the voting place, where you are unable to enter the voting enclosure to vote in-person without physical assistance.

Q16. What if I have other questions?

A. Give us a call at 919-560-0700 during our regular business hours (weekdays 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.) or send us an e-mail at elections@dconc.gov. More information is also available at our website, www.dcovotes.com. See you at the polls!