

## 2026 County Primary Election Cycle

If Putnam County's political parties call for a primary, it will be held on Tuesday, May 5, 2026. The individuals that obtain the most votes during the Primary Elections will advance to the General Elections to run against any party's nominee and all the independents that qualified for that office.

The **2026 County General Election** will be held on Thursday, August 6, 2026. For any county office, party nominees and independent candidates all qualify at the same time. Municipal Elections will also be held in the General Election. Municipal candidates qualify at a different time than county candidates.

## 2026 State and Federal Primary Election Cycle

The State Primary for the offices of Governor, U.S. Senate, U.S. House, 6<sup>th</sup> district, State Senate, 15<sup>th</sup> district, & State Representative 25<sup>th</sup> & 42<sup>nd</sup> districts will also be August 6, 2026 (Thursday).

## 2026 November General Election

Tuesday, November 3, 2026, is the Federal and State General Election Date for the offices on the August 6<sup>th</sup> State Primary Ballot.

## Office Seekers

Candidates for Federal, State, County or Municipal Office should contact their local County Election Office to inquire about nominating procedures, qualifications and qualifying deadlines for various elected offices.



**Putnam County Election Commission**

705 County Services Dr  
Cookeville, TN 38501

[www.putnamcountyttn.gov/election-commission](http://www.putnamcountyttn.gov/election-commission)  
(931) 526-2566

## Differences Between



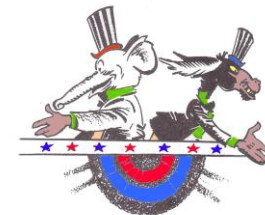
## Primary Elections and General Elections

First time voters and voters new to our state are often confused by what is expected of them at a Primary Election and what is expected of them at a General Election.

A **Primary Election** is a nominating election. Winning the party's nomination is the first step in the election process. It narrows the field in a political party to one individual for a specific office.

A **General Election** is the election in which all voters make the **final choice** from among the party nominees and the independent candidates for a specific office.

**\*\*Not all elected offices are nominated by party\*\***



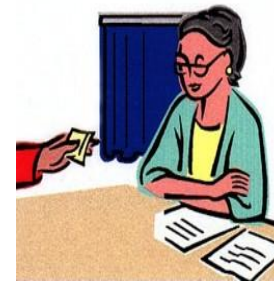
When a candidate is successful in a **Primary Election**, they advance to the **General Election** for their particular office. For example: in a Primary Election for the Office of US Senate, the Democrats run against Democrats and the Republicans run against Republicans. The successful Democratic nominee and the successful Republican nominee for US Senate would advance to the General Election to face each other and any independent candidates.

Individuals who are the top vote getter in the **General Election** are elected with the powers and responsibilities granted to their office by law.



The voter's declaration is recorded on a signed *Application for Ballot*. The ballot issued to the voter for the Primary Election will have only the names of candidates in the party that the voter has chosen.

When two Primary Elections are being conducted on the same date (for example, Presidential Preference and County Primary), the voter is prohibited from choosing one political party locally and the other political party nationally. Their ballot will be a straight Republican Ballot, or it will be a straight Democratic Ballot.



## VOTING AT A PRIMARY ELECTION

**In Tennessee, citizens register to vote.** No declaration of party affiliation is required at the time of registration. Tennessee does not register by party.

All legally registered voters in Tennessee are issued a "Voter Registration Card" by their county election office. No party affiliation appears on the voter's card.



When a voter appears to vote during any **Primary Election**, they must declare which party they are affiliated with, either Republican or Democratic.

## Offices with a Mandatory Primary Election

President, Governor, U.S. Senate, U.S. Congress, State Senate and State Representative

## What about County Offices & Primaries?

Each of your county's Political Parties has the right to call a County Primary Election for **any or all** the County Offices and School Board elected in Tennessee. Local County Election Offices have no authority or right to call a county primary election for either party (nor do local county commissions).

Municipal Offices are not elected by political party affiliation in the State of Tennessee (unless a city charter expressly permits a primary for a city office).