Filing for Office: Court of Appeals, District, Circuit, and Probate Judge

Michigan Election Law governs the ballot access procedures for candidates seeking the office of Court of Appeals, District, Circuit, Probate, or Probate District Judge. As these procedures are subject to change by the state Legislature, candidates interested in participating in Michigan's August Primary Election or November General Election are encouraged to consult our website, Michigan.gov/Elections, for updates.

General requirements

Certain legal requirements are applicable to all candidates seeking the office of Court of Appeals, District, Circuit, or Probate Judge regardless of political party affiliation (Const 1963, art 6, § 19).

Candidate qualifications:
All candidates seeking a judgeship must:

1) be licensed to practice law in Michigan
2) have practiced law for at least five years, and
3) be younger than age 70 on Election Day

Additional qualifications include the following:

Court of Appeals Judge	Registered and qualified elector of the appellate court district in which election is sought by the filing deadline or the date affidavit of candidacy is filed (MCL 168.409).
Circuit Court Judge	Registered and qualified elector of the judicial circuit by the filing deadline or the date affidavit of candidacy is filed (MCL 168.411).
District Court Judge	Registered and qualified elector of the judicial district and election division in which election is sought by the filing deadline or the date affidavit of candidacy is filed (MCL 168.467).
Probate Court Judge	Registered and qualified elector of the county in which election is sought by the filing deadline or the date affidavit of candidacy is filed (MCL 168.431).
Probate District Court Judge	Registered and qualified elector of the district in which the election is being sought by the filing deadline or the date affidavit of candidacy is filed (See MCL 600.803; MCL 168.433).

Affidavit of Identity: Incumbent candidates for Court of Appeals, District, Circuit, Probate, or Probate District Judge must submit an Incumbent Judicial Affidavit of Identity and Affidavit of Candidacy in duplicate when filing for office. Non-incumbent candidates must submit a Non-Incumbent Affidavit of Identity and Affidavit of Constitutional Qualification in duplicate when filing for office. Forms can be obtained through any county clerk's office or from the Bureau of Elections (BOE). The Affidavit of Identity form is also available on BOE's website under "Ballot Access." MCL 168.558.

Candidates who fail to comply with the Affidavit of Identity filing requirements are ineligible to appear on the ballot

Michigan Election Law requires any candidate filing an Affidavit of Identity to state on the form that, at the date the affidavit was executed, all campaign finance statements, reports, late filing fees, and fines required of the candidate, or any candidate committee (current or past) organized to support the candidate's election under Michigan's Campaign Finance Act have been filed or paid. **Candidates that have any outstanding notices of Failure to File or outstanding late filing fees with any filing official in Michigan are ineligible to appear on the ballot (**MCL 168.558).

Campaign finance reports: State and local candidates are required to comply with the financial disclosure requirements provided under the Michigan Campaign Finance Act, PA 388 of 1976.

An individual becomes a candidate under the Michigan Campaign Finance Act as soon as the individual does one of the following:

- Files an affidavit, fee or nominating petition **OR**
- Is certified as the nominee of their political party **OR**
- Receives a contribution (**includes contributions from the candidate's own personal funds**), makes an expenditure, or authorizes someone else to do so on their behalf **OR**
- Is the subject of a recall vote **OR**
- Was elected to an elective office and can seek re-election.

Once any of the conditions above is met, a candidate has:

- 10 days to form a Candidate Committee
- 10 additional days to file the Statement of Organization online
- **Example: On May 1, 2026, an individual is nominated at their political party convention for the Office of Governor. The formation date of their Candidate Committee can be no later than May 11, 2026, and the Statement of Organization is due to BOE on or before May 21, 2026.**

Michigan Election Law requires any candidate filing an Affidavit of Identity to state on the form that on the date the affidavit was executed, all statements, reports,

late filing fees and fines required of the candidate, or any Candidate Committee organized to support the candidate's election under Michigan's Campaign Finance Act have been filed or paid. **Candidates that have any outstanding notices of Failure to File or outstanding late filing fees with any filing official in the State are ineligible to appear on the ballot (**MCL 168.558).

Placement on the ballot

Judicial positions, except for Michigan Supreme Court Justice, appear on the Primary Election ballot if more than twice the number of persons to be elected file for the office. A judicial position for which only one person is to be elected must have at least three candidates file for the office to appear on the Primary Election ballot and, in this circumstance, the top two candidates who receive the most votes will advance to the General Election. If an insufficient number of candidates file to trigger a Primary Election, all candidates will appear on the General Election ballot.

Incumbent Court of Appeals, District, Circuit, Probate, and Probate District Judge candidates

Filing requirements: An incumbent candidate seeking a nomination to the judicial office of Court of Appeals, District, Circuit, Probate, or Probate District Judge must file an Incumbent Affidavit of Identity and Affidavit of Candidacy in duplicate no later than 5 p.m. 134 days before the August Primary (MCL 168.409b, MCL 168.413a, MCL 168.433a, MCL 168.467c).

Such candidates will appear on the August Primary Election ballot; the winning nominees will appear on the November General Election ballot. **Please see the chart at the end of the document for the current election cycle filing deadlines.**

Withdrawal: Judicial candidates who wish to withdraw must submit a written statement of withdrawal to the appropriate filing official within the statutory deadline. (MCL 168.409c, MCL 168.414, MCL 168.434, MCL 168.467d). Please see the chart at the end of the document for the current election cycle filing deadlines.

Non-Incumbent Court of Appeals, District, Circuit, Probate, and Probate District Judge candidates

Filing requirements: A non-incumbent candidate seeking a nomination to the judicial office of Court of Appeals, District, Circuit, Probate, or Probate District Judge must file a Non-Incumbent Affidavit of Identity and Affidavit of Constitutional Qualification in duplicate and nonpartisan nominating petitions no later than 4 p.m. on the fifteenth Tuesday before the August Primary (MCL 168.409b, MCL 168.413, MCL 168.433, MCL 168.467b).

Such candidates will appear on the August Primary Election ballot; the winning nominees will appear on the November General Election ballot. **Please see the chart at the end of the document for the current election cycle filing deadlines.**

Withdrawal: Judicial candidates who wish to withdraw must submit a written statement of withdrawal to the appropriate filing official within the statutory deadline. (MCL 168.409c, MCL 168.414, MCL 168.434, MCL 168.467d). Please see the chart at the end of the document for the current election cycle filing deadlines.

Petition requirements: All petitions used by candidates must be in the form required under Michigan Election Law. Sample petition forms can be obtained through BOE or any county clerk's office. Petition sheets may be purchased from commercial suppliers that produce election materials.

Non-Incumbent candidates seeking the nomination of Court of Appeals, District, Circuit, Probate or Probate District Judge may use the **Countywide Nonpartisan Nominating Petition form** or the **City/Township Nonpartisan Nominating Petition form**. The "city/township" version of the form is designed for circulation within a single city or township; the "countywide" version of the form can be signed by anyone registered to vote in any city or township that falls within the boundaries of the county listed in the heading. Please see the Judicial Elective Office Manual for office designations and signature requirements. A filing fee option is **not** available.

Write-in candidates

Filing requirements: A candidate seeking any judicial office with write-in votes must file a Declaration of Intent with BOE no later than 4 p.m. on the second Friday immediately before the election **(**MCL 168.737a). **Please see the chart at the end of the document for the current election cycle filing deadlines.**

The Declaration of Intent form is available on the Bureau's website under "Ballot Access."

Filing official

The filings for the offices of Court of Appeals, District, Circuit, and Probate District Judge must be submitted to the Bureau at the following address:

Michigan Department of State
Bureau of Elections
Richard H. Austin Building – 1st Floor
430 West Allegan St
Lansing, Michigan 48933

Phone: 800-292-5973
Fax: 517-335-3235
Email:MDOS-File-Canvass@Michigan.gov

Electronic submissions are not acceptable.

Filings for the office of **Probate Court** are filed at the county clerk's office.

2026 Filing Dates, Forms, and Petitions

August 4, 2026, Primary Election
November 3, 2026, General Election

Office	Incumbency	Type of nomination	Forms and petitions (if any) required	Filing location	Filing deadline	Withdrawal deadline
Justice of the Supreme Court	Incumbent - Party nomination	Convention nomination	Incumbent Judicial Affidavit of Identity & Affidavit of Candidacy form AND	BOE	7/6/2026 5 PM	4 business days following convention by 4 PM
			Certification of Party Nomination AND Certificate of Acceptance	BOE	1 business day following convention	4 business days following convention by 4 PM
	Incumbent - Non-partisan	Affidavit	Incumbent Judicial Affidavit of Identity & Affidavit of Candidacy form	BOE	7/6/2026 5 PM	4 business days following convention by 4 PM
	Non-Incumbent - Party nomination	Convention	Non-Incumbent Affidavit of Identity & Affidavit of Constitutional Qualification Form AND Certification of Party Nomination AND Certificate of Acceptance	BOE	1 business day following convention	4 business days following convention by 4 PM
	Non-Incumbent - No Party Affiliation	Affidavit AND Qualifying Petition*	Non-Incumbent Affidavit of Identity & Affidavit of Constitutional Qualification form AND Qualifying petitions	BOE	7/16/2026 4PM	7/20/2026 4 PM

***See Qualifying Petition Manual for more information.**

2026 Filing Dates, Forms, and Petitions (continued)

August 4, 2026, Primary Election
November 3, 2026, General Election

Office	Incumbency	Type of nomination	Forms and petitions (if any) required	Filing location	Filing deadline	Withdrawal deadline
Court of Appeals Judge	Incumbent	Affidavit	Incumbent Judicial Affidavit of Identity & Affidavit of Candidacy form in duplicate	BOE	3/23/2026 5 PM	3/26/2026 5 PM
	Non-Incumbent	Nominating petition	Non-Incumbent Affidavit of Identity & Affidavit of Constitutional Qualification form in duplicate AND Non-Partisan Nominating Petition	BOE	4/21/2026 4 PM	4/24/2026 5 PM
Circuit Court Judge	Incumbent	Affidavit	Incumbent Judicial Affidavit of Identity & Affidavit of Candidacy form in duplicate	BOE	3/23/2026 5 PM	3/26/2026 5 PM
	Non-Incumbent	Nominating petition	Non-Incumbent Affidavit of Identity & Affidavit of Constitutional Qualification form in duplicate AND Non-Partisan Nominating Petition	BOE	4/21/2026 4 PM	4/24/2026 5 PM
District Court Judge	Incumbent	Affidavit	Incumbent Judicial Affidavit of Identity & Affidavit of Candidacy form in duplicate	BOE	3/23/2026 5 PM	3/26/2026 5 PM
	Non-Incumbent	Nominating petition	Non-Incumbent Affidavit of Identity & Affidavit of Constitutional Qualification form in duplicate AND Non-Partisan Nominating Petition	BOE	4/21/2026 4 PM	4/24/2026 5 PM

2026 Filing Dates, Forms, and Petitions (continued)

August 4, 2026, Primary Election
November 3, 2026, General Election

Office	Incumbency	Type of nomination	Forms and petitions (if any) required	Filing location	Filing deadline	Withdrawal deadline
Probate District Court Judge	Incumbent	Affidavit	Incumbent Judicial Affidavit of Identity & Affidavit of Candidacy form in duplicate	BOE	3/23/2026 5 PM	3/26/2026 5 PM
	Non-Incumbent	Nominating petition	Non-Incumbent Affidavit of Identity & Affidavit of Constitutional Qualification form in duplicate AND Non-Partisan Nominating Petition	BOE	4/21/2026 4 PM	4/24/2026 5 PM
Probate Court Judge	Incumbent	Affidavit	Incumbent Judicial Affidavit of Identity & Affidavit of Candidacy form in duplicate	County Clerk	3/23/2026 5 PM	3/26/2026 5 PM
	Non-Incumbent	Nominating petition	Non-Incumbent Affidavit of Identity & Affidavit of Constitutional Qualification form in duplicate AND Non-Partisan Nominating Petition	County Clerk	4/21/2026 4 PM	4/24/2026 5 PM
Write-In candidate - all judgeships - Primary Ballot	Non-Incumbent	N/A	Write-in candidate Declaration of Intent	BOE	7/24/2026 4 PM	N/A
Write-In candidate - All judgeships - General election ballot	Non-Incumbent	N/A	Write-in candidate Declaration of Intent	BOE	10/23/2026 4 PM	N/A