

TABLE 6.3  
**Methods of Nominating Candidates for State Offices**

<i>State or other jurisdiction</i>	<i>Methods of nominating candidates</i>
<b>Alabama</b>	Primary election; however, the state executive committee or other governing body of any political party may choose instead to hold a state convention for the purpose of nominating candidates. Submitting a petition to run as an independent or third-party candidate or an independent nominating procedure.
<b>Alaska</b>	Primary election. Petition for no-party candidates.
<b>Arizona</b>	Candidates who are members of a recognized party are nominated by an open primary election. Candidates who are not members of a recognized political party may file petitions to appear on the general election ballot. A write-in option is also available.
<b>Arkansas</b>	Primary election, convention and petition.
<b>California</b>	Primary election or independent nomination procedure.
<b>Colorado</b>	Primary election, convention or by petition.
<b>Connecticut</b>	Convention/primary election. Major political parties hold state conventions (convening not earlier than the 68th day and closing not later than the 50th day before the date of the primary) for the purpose of endorsing candidates. If no one challenges the endorsed candidate, no primary election is held. However, if anyone (who received at least 15 percent of the delegate vote on any roll call at the convention) challenges the endorsed candidate, a primary election is held to determine the party nominee for the general election.
<b>Delaware</b>	Primary election for Democrats and primary election and convention for Republicans.
<b>Florida</b>	Primary election. Minor parties may nominate their candidate in any manner they deem proper.
<b>Georgia</b>	Primary election.
<b>Hawaii</b>	Primary election.
<b>Idaho</b>	Primary election and convention. New political parties hold a convention to nominate candidates to be placed on a general election ballot.
<b>Illinois</b>	Primary election. The primary election nominates established party candidates. New political parties and independent candidates go directly to the general election file based on a petition process.
<b>Indiana</b>	Primary election, convention and petition. The governor is chosen by a primary. All other state officers are chosen at a state convention, unless the candidate is an independent. Any party that obtains between 2 percent and 8 percent of the vote for secretary of state may hold a convention to select a candidate.
<b>Iowa</b>	Primary election, convention and petition.
<b>Kansas</b>	Candidates for the two major parties are nominated by primary election. Candidates for minor parties are nominated for the general election at state party conventions. Independent candidates are nominated for the general election by petition.
<b>Kentucky</b>	Primary election. A slate of candidates for governor and lieutenant governor that receives the highest number of its party's votes but which number is less than 40 percent of the votes cast for all slates of candidates of that party, shall be required to participate in a runoff primary with the slate of candidates of the same party receiving the second highest number of votes.
<b>Louisiana</b>	Candidates may qualify for any office they wish, regardless of party affiliation, by completing the qualifying document and paying the appropriate qualifying fee; or a candidate may file a nominating petition.
<b>Maine</b>	Primary election or non-party petition.
<b>Maryland</b>	Primary election, convention and petition. Unaffiliated candidates or candidates affiliated with non-recognized political parties may run for elective office by collecting the requisite number of signatures on a petition. The required number equals 1 percent of the number of registered voters eligible to vote for office. Only recognized non-principal political parties may nominate its candidate by a convention in accordance with its by laws (at this time, Maryland has four non-principal parties: Libertarian, Green, Constitution and Populist).
<b>Massachusetts</b>	Primary election.
<b>Michigan</b>	Governor, state house, state senate use primary election. Lieutenant governor runs as the running mate to gubernatorial candidate, not separately, and is selected through the convention process. Secretary of state and attorney general candidates are chosen at convention. Nominees for State Board of Education, University of Michigan Regents, Michigan State University Trustees and Wayne State University Governors are nominated by convention. Minor parties nominate candidates to all partisan offices by convention.
<b>Minnesota</b>	Primary election. Candidates for minor parties or independent candidates are by petition. They must have the signatures of 2,000 people who will be eligible to vote in the next general election.
<b>Mississippi</b>	Primary election, petition (for independent candidates), independent nominating procedures (third-party candidate).
<b>Missouri</b>	Primary election.
<b>Montana</b>	Primary election and independent nominating procedure.
<b>Nebraska</b>	Primary election.
<b>Nevada</b>	Primary election. Independent candidates are nominated by petition for the general election. Minor parties nominated by petition or by party.
<b>New Hampshire</b>	Primary election. Minor parties by petition.
<b>New Jersey</b>	Primary election. Independent candidates are nominated by petition for the general election.
<b>New Mexico</b>	Statewide candidates petition to go to convention and are nominated in a primary election. District and legislative candidate petition for primary ballot access.
<b>New York</b>	Primary election/petition.
<b>North Carolina</b>	Primary election. Newly recognized parties just granted access submit their first nominees by convention. All established parties use primaries.
<b>North Dakota</b>	Convention/primary election. Political parties hold state conventions for the purpose of endorsing candidates. Endorsed candidates are automatically placed on the primary election ballot, but other candidates may also petition their name on the ballot.
<b>Ohio</b>	Primary election, petition and by declaration of intent to be a write-in candidate.
<b>Oklahoma</b>	Primary election.
<b>Oregon</b>	Primary election. Minor parties hold conventions.

See footnotes at end of table

## ELECTIONS

TABLE 6.3

### Methods of Nominating Candidates for State Offices (continued)

<i>State or other jurisdiction</i>	<i>Methods of nominating candidates</i>
<b>Pennsylvania</b>	Primary election, and petition. Nomination petitions filed by major party candidates to access primary ballot. Nomination papers filed by minor party and independent candidates to access November ballot.
<b>Rhode Island</b>	Primary election.
<b>South Carolina</b>	Primary election for Republicans and Democrats; party conventions held for minor parties. Candidates can have name on ballot via petition.
<b>South Dakota</b>	Convention, petition and independent nominating procedure.
<b>Tennessee</b>	Primary election/petition.
<b>Texas</b>	Primary election/convention. Minor parties without ballot access nominate candidates for the general election after qualifying for ballot access by petition.
<b>Utah</b>	Convention, primary election and petition.
<b>Vermont</b>	Primary election. Major parties by primary, minor parties by convention, independents by petition.
<b>Virginia</b>	Primary election, convention and petition.
<b>Washington</b>	Primary election.
<b>West Virginia</b>	Primary election, convention, petition and independent nominating procedure.
<b>Wisconsin</b>	Primary election/petition. Candidates must file nomination papers (petitions) containing the minimum number of signatures required by law. Candidates appear on the primary ballot for the party they represent. The candidate receiving the most votes in each party primary goes on to the November election.
<b>Wyoming</b>	Primary election.
<b>Dist. of Columbia</b>	Primary election. Independent and minor party candidates file by nominating petition.
<b>American Samoa</b>	Individual files petition for candidacy with the chief election officer. Petition must be signed by statutorily-mandated number of qualified voters.
<b>Guam</b>	Individual files petition for candidacy with the chief election officer. Petition must be signed by statutorily-mandated number of qualified voters.
<b>CNMI*</b>	Candidates are all nominated by petition. Candidates seeking the endorsement of recognized political parties must also include in their submitted petition submission a document signed by the recognized political parties' chairperson/president and secretary attesting to such nomination. Recognized political parties may, or may not, depending on their by-laws and party rules conduct primaries separate from any state election agency participation.
<b>Puerto Rico</b>	Primary election and convention.
<b>U.S. Virgin Islands</b>	Primary election.

*Source:* The Council of State Governments' survey of state websites, March 2019.

*Note:* The nominating methods described here are for state offices; procedures may vary for local candidates. Also, independent candidates may have to petition for nomination.

\*Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands