

Supervisor Elections 2020

It seems a little early, but even though supervisor elections won't take place until November 3, 2020, now is a good time to think about your upcoming elections. Here is the basic timeline for elections in 2020.

December 2019 – Assess which supervisor are up for election in 2020. You should have either two or three supervisors whose terms will expire December 31, 2020. There are exceptions: 1) if you are one of the two CDs that have a seven-member elected board; or 2) if you appointed someone midterm (if this is the case, check to see if that person needs to run for two or four years to keep the terms staggered).

January 9 – The **first** day for a supervisor candidate to file for office. An Declaration for Nomination and Oath of Candidacy form must be submitted to the county election office (form attached). Be sure to fill it out as a non-partisan candidate. There will be no filing fee as this is a non-paid position.

March 9 – The **last** day for supervisor candidate to file for office.

March 19 – The election administrator will determine if an election needs to be held and will notify the CD. An election need not be held if there are an equal number (or less) candidates for open positions. The CD can decide to hold an election anyway.

March 23 – CD needs to let election administrator know if they wish to hold an election regardless of the number of candidates that filed. Keep in mind, there is most likely a cost to the CD for this.

June 2 – Primary if necessary.

November 3 – General election.

January 1, 2021 – New supervisors take office for four years. An oath of office must be signed prior to serving.

General Notes

Who can serve: A qualified elector means any person wishing to run for a conservation district supervisor position, must live in the conservation district, be 18 or older, and must not be serving in a penal institution for a felony.

Primary: A primary is required if twice the number of candidates are running than there are open positions. This is rarely a problem with conservation districts, but it has happened.

General election: All qualified electors living in a conservation district are eligible to vote for supervisor candidates. This is true even when a district has a residency ordinance.

Residency ordinances: CDs have the authority to pass a residency ordinance that divides the district into areas and require supervisors to live in the area they represent. Many CDs still operate as if they had an ordinance, but unless they specifically passed the ordinance, supervisors may live anywhere in the district. The only way to specify where a supervisor lives is if an ordinance has passed. An ordinance is not to be confused with a general map and statement that was filed with the county in the 70's. Only about 15 CDs have a residency ordinance.

If not enough candidates file: All candidates should file an oath of candidacy. If not enough candidates file for the number of open positions, a vacancy is declared. The board can appoint someone to fill the position as if they were elected for the full term.

Recruitment tips: If you find yourself in need of recruiting interested candidates, think about the types of services your board needs. For example, if outdoor education is your priority, reach out to your community and recruit specifically for someone interested in helping do that. Or if you want to tell your story better, recruit for that skill. Your news releases (templates below) should ask for the skills you are looking for or provide examples of the existing work your conservation district is doing. Ask for specific talents to help you accomplish your goals.

You can appoint people that respond to serve as associates until both you and your new recruit feel like it is a good fit. You can appoint members of your community to serve on conservation district committees for specific conservation district goals. Do you want to get more involved in water quality? In soil health? In increasing agricultural profits to keep agriculture strong in your community? Set up committees with new people with like interests. If people feel like they are doing something they believe in, they will be more inclined to participate.