

RUNNING FOR OFFICE MAYOR - BOARD OF ALDERMEN



EXTENSION

Many Mississippi communities will hold elections for Mayor and Board of Aldermen in 2025. These elections are vital in electing the leaders that will drive the success of your community for the next four years. Citizens have until January 31st to qualify for the 2025 municipal elections. Deciding to run for office is something that citizens should thoughtfully consider. Potential candidates should take the time before qualifying to understand the requirements of each office, duties if elected, and the overall commitment required to serve in local government.

IN MISSISSIPPI, THERE ARE FOUR FORMS OF MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT:

- (1) the **mayor-board of aldermen form** of government (also known as the “code charter” form) is used by approximately 93% of municipalities.
- (2) the **strong mayor-council form** (known in Mississippi as the mayor-council form)
- (3) the **commission form**
- (4) the **council-manager form**.

The information in this publication is based on the **mayor-board of aldermen code charter form**. Those seeking information on the other forms of government should consult the [Municipal Government in Mississippi](#) book found on the MSU Extension Center for Government & Community Development website.

If you are unsure of your municipality's form of government, you can refer to Appendix V to locate your municipality.

RUNNING FOR OFFICE

MAYOR - BOARD OF ALDERMEN



MUNICIPAL OFFICES ON THE BALLOT IN 2025

Mayor
Alderman

GENERAL DUTIES OF MAYOR

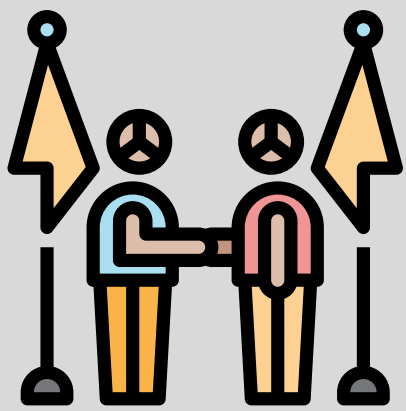
The mayor is vested with the “superintending control” of all officers and affairs of the municipality and is charged with seeing that the laws and ordinances are executed. The mayor oversees the daily operation of the municipal government and makes recommendations to the board. The mayor presides over all meetings of the board of aldermen (and thus recognizes its members for the purpose of making motions, speaking to motions, and so on) but is allowed to vote only in case of a tie.

The mayor presides over all meetings of the board of aldermen (and thus recognizes its members for the purpose of making motions, speaking to motions, and so on) but is allowed to vote only in case of a tie. The mayor has the power to veto any ordinance, resolution, or order adopted by the board of aldermen by returning the measure to the board, together with a written statement of his objections to all or any part of it, within ten days of its receipt. The mayor is required to sign all commissions and appointments of officers chosen by the mayor and board of aldermen. While the in-office hours of a mayor depend on the size and complexity of the municipality, serving as an elected official is considered by many a full-time job. The position of mayor is truly a “weak” one in the mayor-board of aldermen form of government, since the mayor is given responsibility for superintending all officers and affairs and for seeing that the laws and ordinances are executed but is not given sufficient powers to do so.



RUNNING FOR OFFICE

MAYOR - BOARD OF ALDERMEN



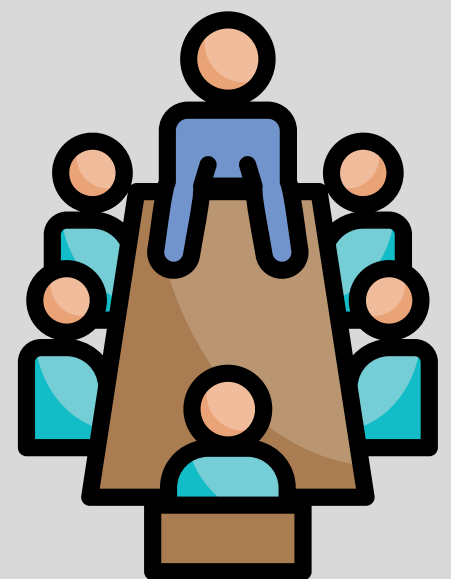
GENERAL DUTIES OF ALDERMAN

Depending on the population of the municipality, aldermen are elected to represent the community as a whole or are elected to represent geographical wards. They are to serve as the legislative body of the city. Aldermen must attend at a minimum one to two regularly scheduled board meetings. At these meetings, they conduct the business of the municipality by making motions and casting votes on public policy (ordinances, resolutions, and orders).

Aldermen “may not become involved in the day-to-day operation of municipal government or in the direction of a department head”, MS AG Op., Baker (March 8, 1995), and they do not have the individual authority to “direct daily activities of employees.” The board of aldermen hires and fires municipal employees subject to the mayor’s veto. While not considered a full-time job or having required office hours, the position of alderman can be time-consuming. Potential candidates should consider the meeting requirements as well as the time required to represent, in some cases, several thousand constituents.

SHARED DUTIES OF THE MAYOR AND BOARD

One of the most significant areas of shared power in municipal government is the authority to appoint and dismiss officials and employees. The mayor and board of aldermen jointly share this responsibility, which includes appointing municipal officers such as the municipal clerk, municipal judge, marshal or chief of police, and other necessary officials. They also have the authority to define their duties, set compensation, and require surety bonds for officers and employees handling public funds.



RUNNING FOR OFFICE

MAYOR - BOARD OF ALDERMEN

SHARED DUTIES OF THE MAYOR AND BOARD CONTINUED

Notably, the positions of municipal judge and marshal or chief of police may be either appointed or elected. In practice, the board of aldermen handles hiring and firing decisions, subject to the mayor's veto, while the mayor oversees the daily operations of the municipal government and provides recommendations to the board. Since 1976, the mayor and aldermen have also had the authority to create the position of a chief administrative officer, but this requires a two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$) vote of the aldermen to enact the necessary ordinance.

REQUIREMENTS TO QUALIFY FOR OFFICE

- The candidate is a qualified, registered voter of the municipality and of the ward, if the office sought is elected from a ward.
- The candidate meets all required residency requirements. A candidate for any municipal office shall be a resident of the municipality, county, county district or other territory that he or she seeks to represent in such office for two (2) years immediately preceding the day of election. The provisions of this section shall not apply to any municipality with less than one thousand (1,000) residents according to the latest federal decennial census.
- The candidate must not have been convicted of a disqualifying crime.

STEPS TO CONSIDER BEFORE RUNNING FOR OFFICE

- Consider why you desire to run for office. What motivates you to serve?
- Discuss the idea with immediate and trusted family and a close circle of friends. Seek their honest feedback about the election process and your ability to serve in the office.
- Make sure you meet the qualifications for the office.
- Thoroughly review resources to understand Municipal Government rules and regulations. Start with the Municipal Government in Mississippi book found on the MSU Extension Center for Government & Community Development website.

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STEPS TO CONSIDER BEFORE RUNNING FOR OFFICE CONTINUED

- Review [Ethical](#) Considerations for serving in public office. Will you have to leave your current employment?
- Will serving in this office affect a business owned by you or a close family member?
- Do you currently serve in an elected or appointed capacity that would require you to vacate your seat?
- Consider the amount of time and money needed to run a successful campaign. Consult others who have run for local office for an idea of what is involved.
- Assemble a group of trusted family members and friends to help develop your campaign team and map out a plan.
- Complete and File [Qualifying Paperwork](#)
- State law requires all candidates for elected office to file a [Statement of Economic Interest](#) with the Mississippi Ethics Commission within 15 days after the deadline for qualification for that public office.
- File Necessary [Campaign Finance](#) Forms with the Mississippi Secretary of State's office.

IMPORTANT 2025 DEADLINES

- **January 31st:** Qualifying Deadline
- **February 17th:** Absentee Voting for Primary Begins
- **April 1st:** Primary Election
- **April 22nd:** Primary Runoff
- **April 21st:** (or as soon as practicable if there is a runoff) Absentee Voting for General
- **June 3rd:** General Election



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FOR MORE INFORMATION

The Mississippi State University Extension Center for Government and Community Development staff design and deliver educational programs, training activities, information, and technical assistance in response to the high-priority economic and community development needs of Mississippi communities and their citizens. Participants in GCD programs include local government leaders, community-based organizations, state and local agencies, and business enterprises.

To learn more, visit gcd.extension.msstate.edu.

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