



July 21, 2020

FACT SHEET What you need to know about the Primary Election

Florida will hold its primary election on August 18, 2020. The primary precedes the November general election and is the process by which voters choose their preferred candidates for the general election.

Here is some important information to help you prepare for the August primary:

Florida is a **closed primary state**. This means that only voters who are affiliated with a political party may vote in the party's primary. Voters with minor or no party affiliation may only vote in non-partisan races, such as school board and municipal offices, or in **universal primary contests**. However, there is something for everyone on the August 18 ballot, regardless of party affiliation.

Party Changes - Voters may change party affiliation up to 29 days before the registration books close for an election. For the August 18 primary, the party change deadline was Monday, July 20.

Universal Primary Contest - A Universal primary contest occurs when all the candidates for office are of the same political party and the winner will have no opposition in the general election. All voters, regardless of party affiliation, may vote in a UPC. There are two universal primary contests on the August ballot – the race for Sheriff and a State House District 70 race. The race for Sheriff will appear on all Sarasota County ballots, while the District 70 race will only appear on the ballots of voters who live within the district.

Nonpartisan Contests - Nonpartisan primary contests include School Board Seats 2 and 3, which will appear on all ballots in the county, and two municipal races in each of the cities of North Port and Sarasota. In the **City of North Port**, all voters residing within the city limits are eligible to vote in both the City Commission District Seat 1 and City Commission District Seat 2 races. However, in the **City of Sarasota**, voters are required to live in either City Commission District 2 or City Commission District 3 to be eligible to vote in their respective district's contest.

Democratic Voters - In addition to the nonpartisan and UPC races mentioned above, all Democratic electors will be able to vote in the primary race for Hospital Board Central District Seat 1.

Republican Voters – All Republican primary ballots will include races for State Attorney, Charter Review Board Districts 1 and 2, Hospital Board at Large Seat 1, and State Committeewoman. In addition to these and the nonpartisan and UPC contests, Republican ballots may also contain, depending on one's voting districts, a State House District 72 race and/or a race for Board of County Commissioners District 1 or District 5. Republican voters who reside in Precinct 505 will also see races for Precinct Committeeman and Precinct Committeewoman on their ballots.

Sample Ballots - A voter can view his or her personalized sample ballot at SarasotaVotes.com by selecting the “Precinct Finder” icon at the top of the home page and entering the required information. A sample ballot will also be mailed in late July to every voter who does not request a vote-by-mail ballot.

Vote-by-Mail - Any voter may request a vote-by-mail ballot by email to SarasotaVotes.com/VoteByMail or by calling 941.861.8618. To be counted, vote-by-mail ballots must be returned in time to reach the elections office by 7 p.m. on August 18.

Early Voting - Early voting for the August 18 primary begins Saturday, August 8 and continues through Sunday, August 16, 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. daily. Go to SarasotaVotes.com for more information about early voting.

Polling Place Changes – Sixteen polling places have been temporarily relocated for the August 18 primary due to continuing circumstances surrounding the Coronavirus pandemic. Information will be mailed to all affected voters and a notice of changes has been posted on our website.

For all the most up-to-date election news, visit SarasotaVotes.com.

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