



Fergus County Elections

2026 CANDIDATE FILING INFORMATION

First Day to File: Tuesday February 17, 2026, 8 a.m.

Last Day to File: Wednesday March 4, 2026 5 p.m.

Local Government Write-in Candidate Deadline (**Primary**): Wednesday March 4, 2026

Local Government Write-in Candidate Deadline (**General**): Wednesday August 5, 2026

Primary Election: TUESDAY, JUNE 2ND - 2026

General Election: TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 3RD - 2026

Filing Forms Located at:

The Office of Clerk & Recorder/ Election Administrator

712 W Main St, Suite 204 Lewistown, MT 59457

Phone: (406) 535-5242 Email: elections@fergusmt.gov

Web: <https://fergusmt.gov/departments/clerk-recorder-elections>

General Qualifications for County Office

7-4-2201. General qualifications for county office. A person is not eligible for a county office who at the time of election is **not**:

- (1) of the voting age required by the Montana constitution;
- (2) a citizen of the state; and
- (3) (a) an elector of the county in which the duties of the office are to be exercised; or
(b) in the case of an office consolidated between two or more counties, an elector in one of the counties in which the duties of the office are to be exercised.

13-10-202. Filing fees. Filing fees are as follows:

- (1) for offices having an annual salary of \$2,500 or less and candidates for the legislature, \$15;
- (2) for county offices having an annual salary of more than \$2,500, 0.5% of the total annual salary;
- (3) for President in a presidential preference primary, an amount equivalent to the filing fee required for a United States senate candidate;
- (4) for other offices having an annual salary of more than \$2,500, 1% of the total annual salary;
- (5) for offices in which compensation is paid in fees, \$10;
for officers of political parties, presidential electors, and officers who receive no salary or fees, no filing fee is required.

13-10-325. Withdrawal from nomination.

(1) (a) A candidate for nomination or a candidate for election to an office may withdraw from the election by sending a statement of withdrawal to the officer with whom the candidate's declaration, petition, or acceptance of nomination was filed. The statement must contain all information necessary to identify the candidate and the office sought. Unless filed electronically with the Secretary of State, the statement of withdrawal from nomination must be acknowledged by an officer empowered to acknowledge signatures or by the officer of the office at which the filing is made.

(b) A candidate may not withdraw after the candidate filing deadline established in **13-10-201(7)**.

(2) Filing fees paid by the candidate may not be refunded.

COUNTY COMMISSIONER- DISTRICT NO. 1

6 Year Term

Salary: \$69,204.66 Filing Fee: \$346.02

Incumbent: Ross Butcher

(7-4-2107. Compensation of county commissioners. (1) Subject to subsection (2), each member of the board of county commissioners shall receive an annual salary equal to the annual salary established in 7-4-2503 for the clerk and recorder plus \$2,000.)

7-4-2104. Commissioners to be elected by district.

(1) At each general election, the member or members of the board of county commissioners to be elected must be selected from the residents and electors of the district or districts in which the vacancy occurs, but the election of the member or members of the board must be submitted to the entire electorate of the county unless otherwise provided for under:

(a) a plan of government provided for in a county adopting an optional or alternative form of government; or
(b) a court order.

(2) A person may not be elected as a member of a board of county commissioners unless the person has resided in the county and the district for at least 2 years immediately preceding the general election.

COUNTY CLERK & RECORDER / ELECTION ADMINISTRATOR

4 Year Term

Salary: \$69,204.66 Filing Fee: \$346.02

Incumbent: Janel J. Tucek

COUNTY TREASURER

4 Year Term

Salary: \$69,204.66 Filing Fee: \$346.02

Incumbent: Kristy Taplin

SHERIFF / CORONER

4 Year Term

Salary: Sheriff - \$69,204.66 + Coroner \$5000.00 stipend = \$74,204.66

Filing Fee: \$371.02

Incumbent: Ryan Peterson

Qualifications for Election or Appointment to Office of Sheriff

7-32-2133. Qualifications for election or appointment to office of sheriff. (1) In addition to meeting the qualifications for county office provided in [7-4-2201](#), a person is not eligible for the position of sheriff at the time of election or appointment unless the individual:

- (a) is a high school graduate or has been issued a high school equivalency diploma by the superintendent of public instruction or by an appropriate issuing agency of another state or of the federal government;
- (b) is at least 18 years of age;
- (c) is a United States citizen;
- (d) possesses or is eligible to possess a valid Montana driver's license;
- (e) has not been convicted of a crime for which the person could have been imprisoned in a federal or state penitentiary;

and

- (f) is eligible to receive and disseminate criminal justice information through the criminal justice information network as defined in [44-2-301](#).

(2) An elected or appointed sheriff who fails to obtain access to the criminal justice information network as required in subsection (1)(f) forfeits office for failure to satisfactorily meet the qualifications required of a sheriff.

7-4-2904. Qualifications for office of county coroner. (1) In addition to the qualifications set forth in **7-4-2201**, to be eligible for the office of coroner, at the time of election or appointment to office a person must be a high school graduate or holder of an equivalency of completion of secondary education as provided by the superintendent of public instruction under **20-7-131** or of an equivalency issued by another state or jurisdiction.

(2) Each coroner, before entering the duties of office, shall:

- (a) take and file with the county clerk the constitutional oath of office; and
- (b) certify to the county clerk that: (i) the individual has satisfactorily completed the basic coroner course of study provided in **7-4-2905** or that the individual has completed the equivalent educational requirements approved by the attorney general; or (ii) the individual intends to take the basic coroner course at the next offering of the course if the coroner has been appointed or was elected by other than a local government general election and, from the date of appointment or election and assumption of the duties as coroner, a basic coroner course was not offered. A coroner forfeits office for failure to take and satisfactorily complete the next offering of the basic coroner course.

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATOR

4 Year Term MCA 72-15 and 72-5-415(2)

Salary: None Filing Fee: \$15.00

Incumbent: Gary Kruger

COUNTY ATTORNEY

4 Year Term

Salary: \$140,013.00 Filing Fee: \$700.06

Incumbent: Kent Sipe

7-4-2701. Qualifications for county attorney in certain counties. (1) A person is not eligible for the position of full-time county attorney in counties that have a population in excess of 30,000 unless the person is a citizen of the United States and has resided in the state 2 years immediately before taking office and has been admitted to the practice of law for at least 5 years before the date of election or appointment.

(2) A person is not eligible for the position of full-time county attorney in counties that have a population of less than 30,000 unless the person is a citizen of the United States and has resided in the state 2 years immediately before taking office and has been admitted to the practice of law for at least 3 years before the date of election or appointment.

(3) A person is not eligible for the position of part-time county attorney in counties that have a population of less than 30,000 unless the person is a citizen of the United States and resides in the state and has been admitted to the practice of law before taking office.

COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

4 Year Term

Salary: \$69,204.66 Filing Fee: \$346.02

Incumbent: Rhonda Long

(7-4-2503 (2) (a) An elected county superintendent of schools must receive, in addition to the salary based upon subsection (1), the sum of \$400 a year)

20-3-201. Election and qualifications -- part-time office allowed. (1) A county superintendent must be elected in each county of the state unless a county manager form of government has been organized in the county. The county superintendent must be elected at the general election preceding the expiration of the term of office of the incumbent.

(2) Upon verification by the county clerk and recorder, a person is qualified to file for and assume the office of county superintendent who:

- (a) is a qualified elector;
- (b) holds a valid, current class 1 professional certificate, class 2 standard certificate, or class 3 administrative and supervisory certificate issued by the superintendent of public instruction; and
- (c) has at least 3 years of successful teaching experience.

(3) (a) When the office of county superintendent of schools is consolidated with another county office within the county, the office holder must have the qualifications listed in subsection (2) or shall, with the approval of the governing body, contract for the full performance of the duties required of a county superintendent in **20-3-207** and **20-3-210** with:

- (i) another county superintendent, with the approval of the governing body of that county;
- (ii) a former county superintendent; or
- (iii) a person who:
 - (A) is a qualified elector;
 - (B) holds a valid administrative certificate as provided in **20-4-106(1)(c)**;
 - (C) takes the oath of office in **20-1-202**;
 - (D) is bonded in the manner provided for county officers in Title 2, chapter 9, part 7; and

- (b) attends instructional training in the duties of a county superintendent as offered by the superintendent of public instruction. Whenever a governing body contracts with a person for performance of the duties required of a county superintendent under the provisions of subsection (3)(a)(iii), the contract must be for at least the duration of 1 school fiscal year.
- (c) The superintendent of public instruction shall prescribe a contract form to be used.
- (4) The board of county commissioners may establish the office of county superintendent as a part-time office under the provisions of **20-3-213**, and adjust the salary established in **7-4-2503** to make it commensurate with the reduction in hours. A part-time county superintendent shall perform all duties of that office that are required by law.

JUSTICE OF THE PEACE

4 Year Term

Salary: \$69,204.66 Filing Fee: \$346.02

Incumbent: Kelly Mantooth

- 3-10-202. Oath -- proof of certification.** (1) Each Justice of the Peace, elected or appointed, after receipt of the certificate of election or appointment, shall, before entering upon the duties of office, take the constitutional oath of office, which must be filed with the county clerk.
- (3) Before the county clerk may file the oath, the elected or appointed Justice shall satisfy the clerk that the Justice is certified as provided in **3-1-1502** or **3-1-1503**.

COMMUNITY COUNCIL – ALL DISTRICTS

2 Year Term

Salary: \$0 Filing Fee: \$0

CENTRAL COMMITTEE – ALL PRECINCTS

2 Year Term

Salary: \$0 Filing Fee: \$0

Candidate Campaign Finance

All candidates must file their C1 or C1A in CERS **online** with the Commissioner of Political Practices.

For more information, contact the office of the Commissioner of Political Practices

Phone: (406) 444-2942 and see the following page.

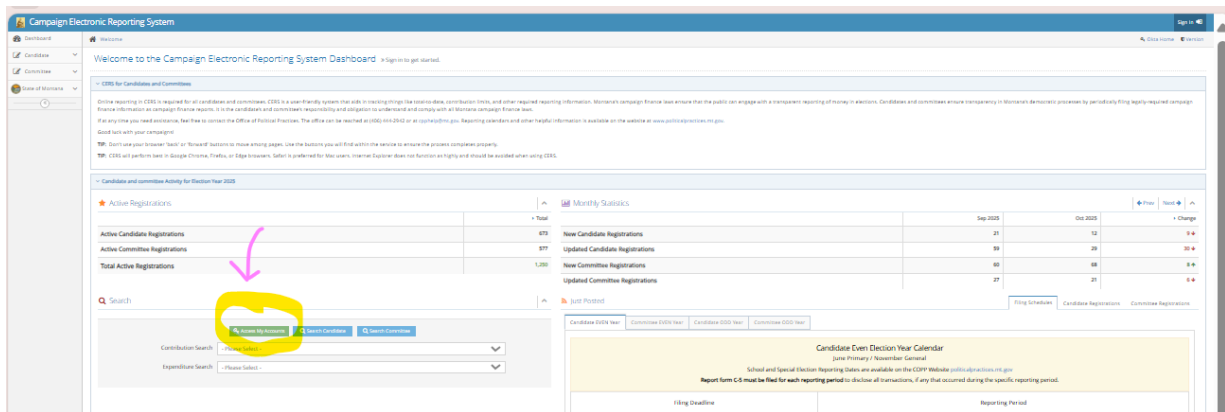
How to file the C1 or C1A on CERS: “Statement of Candidacy”

This is just a simple step by step to complete their Statement of Candidacy without having to look all this information up:

- <https://politicalpractices.mt.gov/>

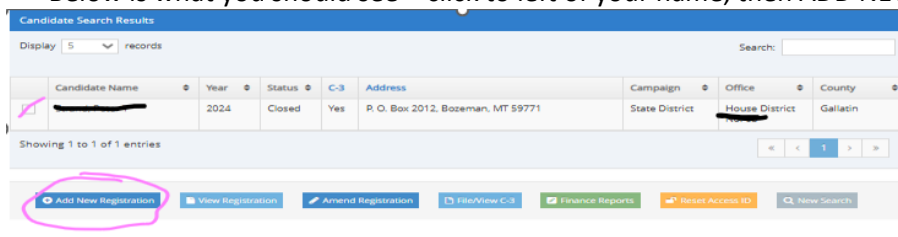


- Click on **ACCESS CERS** on right side of the page under “About Us”.
- Click on the green button, **Access my accounts.**



- This will take you to OKTA.

- Once signed in, this will bring you back to CERS (Campaign Electronic Reporting System).
- Below is what you should see – click to left of your name, then **ADD NEW REGISTRATION**



Beginning with the top section *Campaign Type...please select (click on the type of office you are running for – city, county, school, state district, etc

For bank, you can enter name and address of personal bank.

For **Treasurer**, you can be the treasurer.

- Fill out everything down through the Treasurer section and hit **SAVE.**
- Once you hit save here, it will either show any errors or it will take you to the next page where you need to **click in the box that says you certify all information is correct, then Submit and File.** This is the C1A (Statement of Candidate) filing required. You are done!