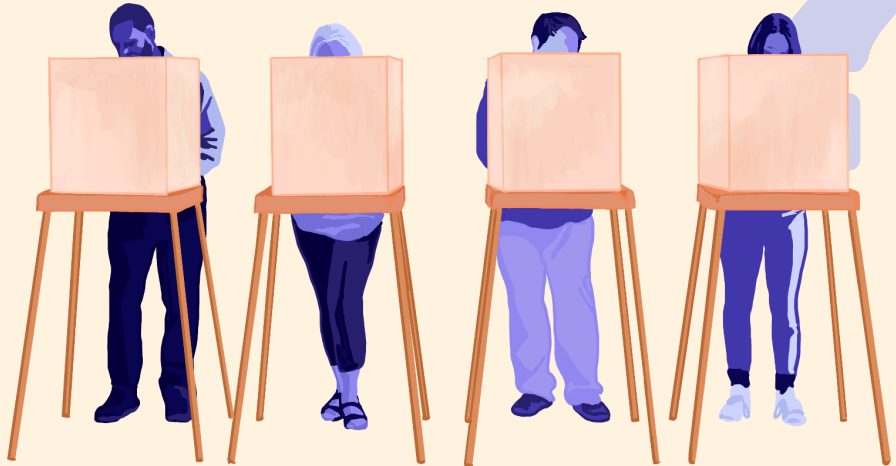


What is the Difference Between a **PRIMARY** and a **GENERAL ELECTION**





What is the Difference Between a Primary and a General Election?

A primary election is when a political party chooses the person who will represent them in a general election. To run in a party primary, a person must meet the basic legal requirements for the office, such as age, citizenship, and residency. In most states, candidates in a party primary must be registered members of that party. Voters then select which candidate they want to advance to the next stage. Primaries can be open or closed, depending on state or federal rules.

A general election is when the people who won the primaries run against each other. Independent or third-party candidates who meet the legal requirements may also be on the ballot. In a general election, all eligible voters can choose any candidate from any party. The winner of the general election becomes the elected official.

In short, primaries determine each party's candidate, while general elections determine who holds the position. Both primary and general elections will happen across several races in 2026.

Source: www.usvotefoundation.org

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