



# *Running For Local Office*

A Quick Reference Guide  
Provided by the Office of the City Clerk

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## *Dear Potential Candidate,*

This quick reference guide was prepared to assist City of Arroyo Grande electors who are considering running for local office. This guide is not all-encompassing; it merely provides a brief overview and summarizes the basic requirements to establish candidacy. Candidates, committees, and anyone interested in elective office should not rely solely on this guide, but should seek legal counsel or contact the City Clerk for more detailed information.

The Arroyo Grande City Council consists of four Council Members and a Mayor. In 2022 the City transitioned to a district-based election system for its four Council Members. The Mayor continues to be elected at-large by the qualified voters of the City. The Council Member terms are staggered to provide continuity. The term for Council Member is four years, and the term for Mayor is two years.

General Municipal Elections are conducted every even-numbered year in November and are consolidated with the Statewide election.

This guide should address many of your preliminary questions, but please feel free to contact me at (805) 473-5418 if you need additional information.

Sincerely,  
Jessica Matson, City Clerk

# ABOUT ARROYO GRANDE

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Arroyo Grande is a general law City with a Council-Manager form of government. Under this form of government, the City Council is the policy making body and the City Manager is responsible for carrying out Council policy.

The City of Arroyo Grande is governed by a five member City Council, consisting of a directly elected Mayor, elected from the City at large and four Council Members elected within their district. Municipal elections are held each even-numbered year in November. Each election cycle, two Council Member seats and the Mayor seat are open for election. The Mayor is elected for a two-year term, and Council Members are elected for four-year terms.

The Mayor and Council Members are not full-time officials. They are business people, homemakers, retirees, and employees from all of life's endeavors. Because they are citizen representatives charged with developing the City's policies, the Mayor and City Council appoint a City Manager, who is trained and experienced in municipal affairs and operations, and invest the responsibility of the City's administration and operation to the appointee. The City Manager also serves as an advisor to the Mayor and City Council.

The City Council holds regular meetings, which are open to the public, on the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers located at 215 East Branch Street and virtually. Special meetings are held as necessary. The City Council Members and the Mayor have equally weighted votes. A complete agenda packet is available for public review by 12:00 noon on the Friday preceding Council meetings in the lobby of City Hall, 300 East Branch Street, and on the City's website at [www.arroyogrande.org](http://www.arroyogrande.org). You may subscribe to receive automatic email notifications when agendas and meetings are posted using the "Notify Me" feature located on the City's website.

City Council meetings are broadcast live on Charter Cable Channel 20, and rebroadcast three times daily at 9:00 a.m., 6:00 p.m., and 1:00 a.m. for one week following each meeting. Visit [www.slo-span.org](http://www.slo-span.org) for more information. Archived City Council meetings can be viewed at <https://www.arroyogrande.org/751/Agendas-Minutes>.

# GENERAL QUALIFICATIONS

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## **ELIGIBILITY**

A person is eligible to seek and hold office as Mayor or Council Member if he or she is a U.S. citizen, 18 years of age on or before Election Day, a registered voter of the City of Arroyo Grande and otherwise qualified to vote for that office at the time that nomination papers are issued to the person. Elected officials shall continue to reside within the city limits of Arroyo Grande during the term of office. (Election Code §201)

## **FILING FOR MORE THAN ONE OFFICE**

A candidate shall not file nomination papers for more than one municipal office or term of office for the same municipality in the same election. (California Elections Code §10220.5)

# DECLARING CANDIDACY

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Candidates who intend to raise or spend campaign funds must file Form 501 (Candidate Intention) prior to solicitation or receipt of any contribution, or expenditure of any personal funds used for the election (including loans). This form is filed with the City Clerk. The form may be obtained in hard copy from the City Clerk or electronically from the Fair Political Practices Commission (FPPC) website at [www.fppc.ca.gov](http://www.fppc.ca.gov).

# FILING NOMINATION PAPERS

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All candidates wishing to be placed on the ballot are required to complete the nomination process. To obtain nomination papers, please schedule an appointment to meet with the City Clerk during the nomination period, which is 113 to 88 days prior to the election (Elections Code §10220).

During your meeting with the City Clerk, you will be given a more comprehensive Candidate Handbook containing useful information and regulations regarding your candidacy and campaign.

*Please note that if you are interested in declaring your intent to run as a candidate earlier than the nomination period and are considering raising or spending money for your campaign, you are subject to certain filing requirements. Please contact the City Clerk at 805-473-5418 for more information.*

In the Candidate Handbook, you will receive the following documents to complete and file by the end of the nomination period:

- Nomination Paper
- Ballot Designation Worksheet
- Candidate’s Statement of Qualifications Form/Candidate’s Statement
- Form 700, Statement of Economic Interests
- Form 501, Candidate Intention Statement
- Form 410, Recipient Committee Organization Statement
- Code of Fair Campaign Practices (optional)

Filing a Candidate’s Statement of Qualifications to be printed in the sample ballot is optional. Candidates who choose to file a statement must bear the actual cost of printing and distribution.

The Registrar of Voters will estimate the cost, and the candidate will pay the estimated cost at the time of filing nomination papers. Statements are limited to 200 words (Elections Code §13307).

## FINANCIAL AND CAMPAIGN DISCLOSURE OBLIGATIONS

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The FPPC mandates the campaign filing requirements for local candidates. The City Clerk serves as the filing officer for local campaign disclosure statements. Candidates are required to disclose certain economic interests, and must file periodic campaign reports. Failure to file appropriate statements and reports can result in criminal, civil, or administrative penalties. Failure to file within prescribed deadlines can also lead to monetary filing penalties for each day a statement is late. The appropriate forms may be obtained from either the City Clerk’s Office or the FPPC website, [www.fppc.ca.gov](http://www.fppc.ca.gov).

### **Campaign Statements**

The following forms may be obtained from the City Clerk’s Office or the FPPC website, [www.fppc.ca.gov](http://www.fppc.ca.gov).

### **Candidate Intention Statement (Form 501)**

A candidate for local office must file this form prior to solicitation or receipt of any contribution or expenditure of any personal funds used for the election. The form is filed with the City Clerk.

### **Statement of Organization Recipient Committee (Form 410)**

A candidate that raises contributions from others totaling \$2,000 or more during a calendar year must file an original Form 410 with the Secretary of State to disclose campaign bank account information and to receive a campaign committee identification number. A copy of the form is filed with the City Clerk.

### **Recipient Committee Campaign Statement (Form 460)**

A candidate who has a controlled committee, or who has raised or spent or will raise or spend \$2,000 or more during a calendar year in connection with an election to office, will be required to file this form periodically prior to and following the election.

### **Campaign Statement – Short Form – (Form 470)**

Candidates who do not intend to raise or spend \$2,000 in a calendar year in conjunction with their candidacy will file a Form 470 with the City Clerk.

## **Statement of Economic Interests**

Candidates are required to file a Statement of Economic Interests Form 700 disclosing all reportable investments, interests in real property and income.

Please be aware that all statements, and information submitted in conjunction with the statements, are a matter of public record and available for review by any requester.

The Political Reform Act, in part, provides that:

- Receipts and expenditures in election campaigns should be fully and truthfully disclosed in order that the voters may be fully informed and improper practices may be inhibited. (Gov. Code §81002(a))
- Assets and income of public officials that may be materially affected by their official actions should be disclosed, and in appropriate circumstances the officials should be disqualified from acting in order that conflicts of interest may be avoided. (Gov. Code §81002(c))

Forms and manuals may be obtained from the City Clerk's Office or the FPPC website, [www.fppc.ca.gov](http://www.fppc.ca.gov).

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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**Q** Must I live in Arroyo Grande in order to run for elected office?

**A** Yes, you must be a resident and a registered voter of the City to run for a seat on the City Council.

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**Q** If a person owns a business in Arroyo Grande, but does not live in Arroyo Grande, is she or he able to sign the nomination paper?

**A** No, only persons residing and registered to vote in Arroyo Grande may sign the nomination paper.

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**Q** Are the council positions partisan or non-partisan?

**A** Elections for city offices are non-partisan, meaning candidates do not have to declare a political party in order to run for office.

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**Q** How many signatures are required on the nomination paper?

**A** A minimum of 20 and a maximum of 30.

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# IMPORTANT CONTACTS

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## **CITY OF ARROYO GRANDE**

Office of the City Clerk  
300 East Branch Street, CA 93420  
Phone: 805-473-5418  
[www.arroyogrande.org](http://www.arroyogrande.org)

- Campaign Statements for Local Committees and Candidates
  - Forms and Manuals
  - Filing Schedules

## **COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO**

Registrar of Voters  
1055 Monterey Street, Room D120  
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401  
Phone: 805-781-5288  
[www.slovote.com](http://www.slovote.com)

- Vote By Mail Ballots
- Voter Index/Precinct Lists
  - Voter Registration

## **SECRETARY OF STATE**

Political Reform Division  
1500 11th Street, Sacramento, CA 95814  
Phone: 916-653-6224 / Fax: 916-653-5045  
[www.ss.ca.gov](http://www.ss.ca.gov)

- Committee Identification Numbers
- Formation and Termination of Committees

## **FAIR POLITICAL PRACTICES COMMISSION**

428 J Street, Suite 620, Sacramento, CA 95814  
Phone: 866-275-3772 / Fax: 916-322-3711  
[www.fppc.ca.gov](http://www.fppc.ca.gov)

- Campaign Disclosure
- Conflict of Interest Disclosure