

How to Get Involved in Local Government Latah County

I want to be more involved in local government. How do I do that?

- Apply for a seat on a city Board, Commission, or Committee. Boards and Commissions are critical gears in the engine of local government; for a recent example of how much power boards and commissions have over our community, see this week's favorable decision on a Conditional Use Permit for New Saint Andrews' by the Board of Adjustment.
 - More information can be found at <http://www.ci.moscow.id.us/records/Applications/InfoFrm-Regular.pdf>
 - To apply, visit <http://www.ci.moscow.id.us/records/Applications/app-Commission%20Application-FormFields.pdf>. Successful applicants are appointed by the Mayor.
 - Current vacancies include:
 - Arts Commission (2 vacancies)
 - Fair & Affordable Housing Commission (2 vacancies)
 - Farmers' Market Commission (1 vacancy)
 - Historic Preservation Commission (2 vacancies)
 - Sustainable Environment Commission (2 vacancies)
 - Parks and Recreation Commission (1 vacancy)
 - It is important to note that many commissions have members with terms expiring 12/31/2017; check <https://www.ci.moscow.id.us/commissions/Pages/default.aspx> for an updated list of vacancies.
- Attend City Council meetings, held 1st and 3rd Mondays of the month at 7 p.m. in Council Chambers of Moscow City Hall. To sign up for meeting reminders, visit <http://www.moscowchamber.com/events/details/city-of-moscow-city-council-meeting-05-01-2017-999?reminderSuccess=True&reminderDays=1>. Or watch from home on Channel 13!
- For partisan involvement, consider applying to be a precinct captain for your party. Precinct captains are elected officials and serve as liaisons between the county political party and the voters in their neighborhood. Latah County is divided into over 30 precincts, with 16 of those in Moscow: <https://www.latah.id.us/elections/Voter%20Precincts%20Moscow%2011by17.pdf>.

- o Use the Voting Location Finder (<http://www.idahovotes.gov/AbsenteeBallot/Default.aspx>) to identify your precinct, and then get in touch with your political party to see if that precinct needs a captain. Latah County Democrats can be reached via <https://www.latahdems.org/>, and the Latah County Republicans can be reached via <http://www.latahgop.org/>.

I've decided I want to run for office. How do I do that?

First, decide what type of office you are interested in: local, or state/federal. In even numbered years (like 2016 and 2018), Federal and State elections are held. In odd numbered years, like 2017, local elections are held, including city elections. City council terms are staggered, so every election has three city council seats come open. In 2017, there will be four seats open for Moscow City Council because of a mid-term appointment. If you are considering running for local office this year, it is time to get started!

What is the timeline for elections? When should I start?

Now! If you are interested in running for a City Council or other seat in a November election, you should be doing the following, in order, if you have not already:

- Attending meetings of the group you are hoping to be elected to
- Attending community events, build your name recognition and community profile
- Figuring out campaign logistics
 - o Identify and name campaign Treasurer
 - o Campaign contribution guidelines <https://sos.idaho.gov/elect/finance/index.html>
 - o Website
 - o Professional photos
 - o Identify and secure Campaign Manager
 - Candidate external/public, Campaign Manager internal/logistics
 - o Contact political party for behind-the-scenes help
- Fundraising
- Canvassing, beginning in August once school starts back
- Get out the vote--local races have notoriously low voter turnout

I heard about filing deadlines. What are those and when do those occur?

Make sure you are aware of filing deadlines. All candidates must declare their candidacy and petition for candidacy (filing) within a certain time before an election is held. Information on filing deadlines is included in the 2017 election calendar, and is usually around six to eight weeks before the election. For example, the filing deadline for the November 2017 elections is September 8th 2017, by 5 p.m.

What do you need to file? Usually a nominal application/filing fee, signatures of support by residents in your voting area, and signed and notarized declaration of candidacy and petition of candidacy forms. Note that you can always file to be a candidate for an election and later withdraw--but not the other way around.

Additional Resources

Idaho Votes: A Citizen's Guide to Participation

http://www.idahovotes.gov/VoterGuide/Citizens_Guide_to_Participation_English.pdf

Idaho Secretary of State Consolidated Election Calendar, Latah County, 2017

<https://www.sos.idaho.gov/elect/2017consol/Latah.pdf>

Moscow City Code

<https://www.ci.moscow.id.us/records/Pages/city-code.aspx>

Idaho Secretary of State Consolidated Election Calendar, State, 2017

<https://www.sos.idaho.gov/elect/2017Calendar.html>

Idaho Blue Book

<https://www.sos.idaho.gov/elect/bluebook/index.html>

Elections: https://www.sos.idaho.gov/elect/bluebook/2016/07_Elections.pdf

Consolidation Manual 2017, Secretary of State

<https://www.sos.idaho.gov/elect/Consolidation/2017%20Consol%20Manual.pdf>

Ethics in Government Manual, Secretary of State

<http://www.ag.idaho.gov/publications/legalManuals/EthicsInGovernment.pdf>