

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Article 71 of the Constitution states that Local Government is a vital aspect of democracy and shall be organized so as to involve as many people as possible in the task of managing and developing the communities in which they live. For this purpose, the said Article 71 of the Constitution also states that Parliament shall provide for a country-wide system of Local Government through the establishment of organs of local democratic power as an integral part of the political organisation of the state.

In compliance with Article 71 of the Constitution 71 Local Authority Areas comprising six Municipalities or towns and 65 Neighbourhood Democratic Councils (NDCs) have been established in Guyana.

Two primary objectives of Local Government are to (i) enable democratic local decision-making and action by, and on behalf of communities; and (ii) promote the social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being of communities.

The major goals of Local Government are as follows:-

- Improving the local environment.
- Providing and developing local open space and recreation facilities.
- Setting strategic policy directions.
- Preparing annual plans, budgets and long-term council community plans.
- Acting on behalf of other principals such as central government e.g. managing local grants.
- Administer responsibilities under laws and regulations e.g., building and sanitation.
- Regulating local nuisances such as animal and pest control
- Providing services relevant to road maintenance, waste disposal, park maintenance, rubbish collection, libraries etc.
- Providing an infrastructural and planning framework in which communities can grow and the economy can flourish.
- Coordinating with other agencies operating locally; e.g. Police.
- Promoting cultural and sporting events.
- Promoting local visitor and tourism events.
- Consulting with residents towards improving service provision.
- Developing and advancing community viewpoints.
- Defining and enforcing appropriate rights within communities.

SYSTEM FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS

The approval by Parliament of the **Local Authorities (Elections) (Amendment) Act No. 26 of 2009**, provides for Local Government Elections to be held in all of the existing Seventy-one (71) Local Authority Areas in Guyana using a Mixed Electoral System of **Proportional Representation** and **First-Past-the-Post**.

50% or half of the number of Councillors of each Local Authority Area will be elected through the **Proportional Representation** component and the other 50% through the **First-Past-the-Post** or Constituency component.

This System provides opportunities for **Voluntary Groups, Political Parties and Individual Candidates** to contest for seats in the Municipalities and NDCs.

ONLY Voluntary Groups and Political Parties can contest in the **Proportional Representation** aspect of Local Government Elections.

Voluntary Groups and Political Parties can also contest any or all of the seats under the Constituency component of the elections. The candidate(s) must be living in the Constituency being contested.

Under the **First-Past-The-Post Component**, an individual candidate can contest for **only one seat** in a **single Constituency in which he/she is registered and resides**.

CONSTITUENCIES

Each Local Authority Area is divided into a given number of Constituencies, i.e. half of the number of seats on the Municipality or NDC, for the purpose of electing individual Candidates to represent the respective Constituencies.

A Constituency in the context of Local Government Elections is a specifically demarcated part of a Municipality or Neighbourhood Democratic Council (NDC) as defined and identified by its given boundaries.

A Candidate seeking election under the First-Past-the-Post or Constituency component of the elections must be registered and living in the Constituency in which he/she is seeking to be elected as a Councillor.

Detailed descriptions and sketch maps of all of the Constituencies within the respective Municipalities and NDC's are being displayed at prominent locations within all of the Local Authority Areas and on the GECOM website. Take the opportunity to get to know your Constituency.

WHY YOU MUST VOTE AT LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS?

Local Government officials make decisions every day that affect the well-being of your life, the lives of your family and community. By voting for a Voluntary Group, Political Party or Individual Candidate of your choice, you are electing the people who will make these very important decisions. If you don't vote, then you allow other people who do vote to choose Local Government officials without your input. Those others may not share your views about issues that matter to you. Voting also provides you with an opportunity to remind the elected government officials that they are accountable to you. **Every citizen has the right and responsibility to vote.**

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS OF A VOTER

The eligibility requirements for voting at Local Government Elections are:-

1. You must be 18 years or over by a (qualifying) date to be set by the Guyana Elections Commission relevant to the conduct of Local Government Elections;
2. You must be registered and living in the Municipality or NDC and the Constituency in which you are desirous of voting to be able to vote under both the Proportional Representation and the Constituency components of the election; and
3. You must be listed on the Register of Voters for the Municipality or NDC in which you are desirous of voting.

YOUR RIGHTS AS A VOTER

As a registered voter, you have certain rights, including:

1. To vote as your conscience tells you.
2. To attend political meetings and campaign rallies.
3. To expect an orderly and peaceful election, free from fear, violence or intimidation.

YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES AS A VOTER

As a registered voter, your responsibilities include:

1. Taking part in the election of persons who would be making decisions about your community that affect you directly and indirectly.
2. Knowing the various Voluntary Groups, Political Parties, Individual Candidates, and their stance on important communal issues.
3. Voting only once for the Voluntary Group or Political Party of your choice and once for the Constituency Candidate of your choice.
4. Knowing the boundaries of the Constituency in which you live.
5. Giving other voters equal opportunities to vote.

SUBMISSION OF LISTS OF CANDIDATES TO CONTEST LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS

- Lists of Candidates contesting the Local Government Elections must be submitted not later than the **21st day** before Election Day.
- Each List of Candidates must appoint a Representative and a Deputy Representative of the List **in writing** to the Returning Officer.
- The Representative or Deputy Representative must also make application in writing to the Returning Officer for the allocation of a Symbol not later than the **21st Day** before Election Day. The Returning Officer will thoroughly examine the Lists to ensure that all such Lists satisfy the legal requirements.
- For any List found to be defective, the Returning Officer must not later than the **21st Day** before E-Day inform the Representative or Deputy Representative of the List specifying the defect(s).
- For those Lists found to be in order, the Returning Officer will not later than the **20th day** before E-Day, publicly declare the Titles of the approved Lists and the names of Candidates therein and will give Notice in writing to the Representative or Deputy Representative.
- Defective Lists must be corrected and returned to the Returning Officer not later than the **20th day** before E-Day.

Once a List has been corrected and the Returning Officer is in receipt of same not later than the **20th day** before E-Day, he/she shall publicly declare the Titles and names of the Candidates therein and inform the Representative or Deputy Representative in writing.

- Not later than the **18th Day** before E-day, the Returning Officer shall publish the Titles and Symbols of the Lists approved by him and the names of the Candidates on those Lists.
- Each List of Candidates must be submitted on the prescribed Form and should indicate the name, address, ID number, occupation and signature of each Candidate. The names should be one below the other with the **Surnames in Alphabetical Order**. The signature or mark of each person submitting the List must be stated together with the name and the ID Card number. Each List of Candidates must also be accompanied by a declaration, on the prescribed Form, from each Candidate contesting the Election.
- The List of Candidates submitted by each Voluntary Group or Political Party for the Proportional Representation Component should comprise **ten or more names** of Candidates than the **total number of Councillors for the specific Local Authority Area for the Proportional Representation Component**.
- For the **Constituency Component**, the name of the single candidate contesting each specific Constituency as a nominee of a Political Party or Voluntary Group, or as an independent individual should be submitted.

QUALIFICATION TO BE ELECTED AS COUNCILLORS

A person **CAN** qualify to be elected a Councillor for a Local Authority Area if he/she is registered to vote and is a resident in the Local Authority Area/Constituency in which he/she is seeking election.

A person **CANNOT** qualify to be elected as a Councillor, and if elected, cannot hold or continue in office if he/she:

Is the holder of or is acting in an office specified in the Schedule e.g. Member of the National Assembly, Member of the Police Force/Guyana Defence Force, Judge, Magistrate, Local Government Officer, Ombudsman, Director of Public Prosecutions, Election Officer, Registration Officer etc.

1. Has within 12 months before Election Day received any assistance under the Poor Relief Act.
2. Has within 5 years before Election Day been surcharged to an amount exceeding \$1000 dollars.
3. Is serving a sentence of imprisonment.
4. Has been disqualified from holding office as a Councillor.
5. Has within 5 years prior to Election Day been convicted of a corrupt or illegal practice.
6. Is unable to read or write the English Language.
7. Has consented to the inclusion of his name on a List of Candidates for another Local Authority Area/Constituency.

SUBMISSION OF LISTS OF NAMES OF CANDIDATES QUALIFIED TO BE ELECTED AS COUNCILLORS

For the Proportional Representation Component each Voluntary Group or Political Party must submit a list with ten (10) or more names of candidates than the total number of Councillors for the Proportional Representation Component, i.e. 50% of the seats, for the specific Local Authority Area.

For the Constituency Component:

- **Each Voluntary Group or Political Party** should submit names of Candidates qualified to be Councillors **equal to the number** of Constituency seats which it intends to contest in the Local Authority Area.
- An **Independent Individual** should have his/her **name** submitted for the **one seat in the single constituency** he/she is contesting.

The following should be noted:-

A Candidate's name can appear on **only one Proportional Representation List** and on **only one Constituency List** for only one **Voluntary Group or Political Party**. A Candidate's name cannot appear on the Proportional Representation list and Constituency list of more than one **Voluntary Group or Political Party**.

SUBMISSION OF LISTS OF CANDIDATES AND SUPPORT BY REGISTERED VOTERS

Elections in the Municipalities

Proportional Representation List	Constituency List
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Voluntary Group and Political Party	Must be supported by not less than 50 and not more than 60 registered voters residing in the specific Municipality being contested.	Must be supported by not less than 50 and not more than 60 registered voters residing in the specific Constituency being contested.
Individual Candidate	Cannot contest.	Must be supported by not less than 20 and not more than 30 registered voters residing in the specific Constituency being contested.

Elections in the Neighbourhood Democratic Councils

Proportional Representation List		Constituency List
Voluntary Group and Political Party	Must be supported by not less than 20 and no more than 30 registered voters residing in the specific NDC being contested.	Must supported by not less than 20 and not more than 30 registered voters residing in each specific Constituency being contested.
Individual Candidate	Cannot contest.	Must be supported by not less than 15 and not more than 20 registered voters residing in the specific Constituency being contested.

LOCAL AUTHORITY AREAS

Municipalities

1. Georgetown
2. New Amsterdam
3. Linden
4. Corriverton
5. Rose Hall
6. Anna Regina

Neighbourhood Democratic Councils

1. Port Kaituma/Matthews Ridge/Arakaka
2. Mabaruma/Kumaka/Hosororo
3. Charity/Urasara
4. Evergreen/Paradise
5. Aberdeen/Zorg-en-Vlygt
6. Annandale/Riverstown
7. Pomona/Good Hope
8. Wakenaam
9. Leguan
10. Mora/Parika
11. Hydronie/Good Hope
12. Greenwich Park/Vergenoegen
13. Tuschen/Uitvlugt
14. Stewartville/Cornelia Ida
15. Hague/Blankenburg
16. La Jalousie/Nouvelle Flanders
17. Best /Klien Pouderoeyn
18. Malgré Tout/Meer Zorgen

19. La Grange/Nismes
20. Canals Polder
21. Toevlugt/Potentia
22. Soesdyke/Huist Coverden
23. Caledonia /Good Success
24. Golden Grove/Diamond Place
25. Mocha / Arcadia
26. Herstellng/Little Diamond
27. Eccles/Ramsburg
28. Industry/Plaisance
29. Better Hope/La Bonne Intention
30. Beterverwagting/Triumph
31. Mon Repos/La Reconnaissance
32. Buxton/Foulis
33. Enmore/Hope
34. Haslington/Grove
35. Unity/Vereeniging
36. Cane Grove
37. Woodlands/Farm
38. Mahaicony-Abary
39. Hamlet/Chance
40. Profit/ Rising Sun
41. Seafeld/Tempe
42. Union/Naarstigheid
43. Bath/Woodley Park
44. Woodlands/Bel Air
45. Zeelust/Rosignol

46. Blairmont/Gelderland
47. Enfield/New Doe Park
48. Kintyre / Borlam
49. Gibraltar/Fyrish
50. Ordnance Fort Lands/No.38
51. Canefield/Enterprise
52. Kilcoy//Hampshire
53. Port Mourant/John
54. Bloomfield/ Whim
55. Lancaster/Hogstye

56. Adventure/No. 28 (Bush Lot)
57. Maida/Tarlogie
58. Macedonia/Joppa
59. Black Bush Polder
60. No. 52/No. 74
61. Good Hope/No.51
62. Crabwood Creek/Moleson Creek
63. Bartica
64. Ireng/Sawariwau
65. Kwakwani

GECOM has posted, at the Offices of the respective Municipalities and NDCs, (i) (DRAFT) illustrated maps of each Municipality and NDC showing the Constituencies which have been established within each of them, and (ii) the description of the boundaries of all of the Constituencies. All concerned are advised to visit the Office of the Municipality or NDC in which they live to ascertain the boundaries of the Constituencies in which they live for the purpose of contesting and/or voting at Local Government Elections.