

For Your Information

The Race for Mayor of Atlanta

By Lauri Strauss
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Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms' surprise announcement she will not run for re-election left Atlanta's race for mayor wide open just six months away from Election Day.

Currently, three people have announced plans to run for mayor of Atlanta. They are City Council President Felicia Moore, attorney Sharon Gay and most recently, City Councilman Andre Dickens. Since Mayor Bottoms announced she will not seek re-election, it is expected others will jump into the race as well. In Atlanta's last mayoral election in 2017, 14 candidates qualified to replace Mayor Kasim Reed who was not eligible to run again due to term limits.

Atlanta's municipal elections are nonpartisan. This means candidates do not affiliate with a specific party during their campaign and everyone who qualifies appears on one ballot in the general election. In partisan elections, candidates qualify to appear on the ballot representing a specific party. If more than one candidate qualifies from the same party, they face off in a primary election. The person who gets the most votes from each party in the primary competes in the general election to determine the winner.

Although the race for Atlanta's mayor is nonpartisan, many candidates are affiliated with a political party. For example, Mayor Bottoms is a member of the Democrat party. It is not unusual for candidates in nonpartisan races to be affiliated with a political party. According to [Ballotpedia](#), a majority of the country's largest cities hold nonpartisan races for mayor, even though most of the candidates are members of a political party.

The final date for people to qualify to appear on the ballot for Atlanta mayor is Aug. 20, 2021. In order to qualify, potential candidates must file a Notice of Candidacy and Affidavit with the Municipal clerk and pay a qualifying fee. Elections will take place Tuesday, Nov. 3, 2021. Unless one person wins more than 50 percent of the vote, the top two candidates will face off in a runoff election on Tuesday, Nov. 30, 2021. Although it may feel as though the mayor of Atlanta represents the entire metro area, only residents who live within the Atlanta city limits are eligible to vote for this position.

Atlanta Civic Circle's mission is to inform the public about critical issues facing our city by providing in-depth reporting and presenting possible solutions with opportunities for civic engagement online and in the community.