



International Foundation
for Electoral Systems

Elections in Mexico

2021 Midterm Federal Elections

Frequently Asked Questions

Americas

International Foundation for Electoral Systems

2011 Crystal Drive | Floor 10 | Arlington, VA 22202 | USA | www.IFES.org

June 2, 2021

Frequently Asked Questions

When is Election Day? 1

Why are these elections important? 1

Who are citizens voting for on Election Day? 1

How is Mexico’s political system structured?..... 1

What are Mexico’s electoral authorities? 2

How are the electoral authorities protecting the elections and voters from COVID-19? 3

Who is running in these elections?..... 3

How are campaigns funded?..... 4

Who can vote in these elections?..... 4

How will they vote? 5

When will the newly elected government take office? 5

How will votes be counted?..... 5

Are there any quotas?..... 5

How are the electoral authorities guaranteeing equal access to the electoral process for persons with disabilities? 5

Can Mexicans who reside abroad vote in the elections? 6

Is electoral observation allowed? 6

Resources..... 7

About IFES in Mexico..... 7

Disclosure 7

When is Election Day?

Mexico's midterm federal elections will be held on Sunday, June 6, 2021.

Why are these elections important?

This will be Mexico's largest election. With nearly 94 million registered voters, it will also include the largest number of candidates from the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) community.

This year, Mexico is joining the few countries in Latin America that have implemented online voting for Mexicans residing abroad. The National Electoral Institute (INE) considers this to be the voting mechanism of the future and recognizes its convenience for Mexican voters abroad, encouraging more of them to participate in the electoral process.

Electoral violence during these midterm elections has been 29.5 percent higher than during the 2015 midterm elections. Electoral violence has been marked by aggression, threats, assassination attempts and homicides against candidates and political leaders in Mexico.

Who are citizens voting for on Election Day?

In the upcoming elections, Mexicans will choose:

- 500 deputies;
- 15 governors;
- 30 state legislatures;
- 1,923 mayors;
- 14,426 municipal councils;
- 2,057 syndicates; and
- 431 municipal boards.

The National Electoral Institute has stated that a total of 20,868 posts are up for election, which are being contested by approximately 101,634 candidates.

How is Mexico's political system structured?

Mexico is a presidential republic. The president is elected by simple majority in a plurality voting system and appoints the Cabinet ministers. The members of the National Congress (the Senate and Chamber of Deputies) are elected from single-member districts by a mix of majority vote and proportional representation.

- **President (*President*)** – The president is the head of both the state and the government. Each candidate must be at least 35 years old; a Mexican citizen by birth, as must be at least one of his or her parents; a resident of Mexico for at least 20 years; and must not have been the governor of a state or of Mexico City (or have held other specified offices) for at least six months prior to the election. The main functions of the presidency include directing Mexico's foreign policy and commanding the Mexican armed forces, as well as proposing laws and issuing decrees.

- **Senate (*Cámara de Senadores*)** – The Chamber of Senators is the upper house of Mexico’s National Congress. Three senators are elected from each of Mexico’s 31 states and the federal district of Mexico City, and 32 are elected from national districts through proportional representation. In each state, two senators are elected from the party that receives the most votes, and one is elected from the runner-up party, for a total of 96 senators elected at the state level. Each of the 128 senators is elected for a term of six years. Senators must be at least 25 years old, Mexican citizens by birth and have been born in the state in which they run or resided in that state for at least six months. Their responsibilities include approving treaties and appointments and authorizing the use of troops abroad.
- **Chamber of Deputies (*Cámara de Diputados*)** – Deputies are elected for a three-year term and may be elected for up to four consecutive terms. Candidates must be at least 25 years old, Mexican citizens by birth and have been born in, or resided for at least six months in, the state in which they run. Three hundred deputies are elected by plurality from single-member districts, and 200 deputies are elected through proportional representation in districts that comprise multiple states. One party cannot hold more than 300 seats in the Chamber of Deputies. The responsibilities of the *Cámara* include approving the budget, declaring the president-elect and, together with the Senate, declaring war, raising an army and revising the penal code.
- **Governors (*Gobernadores*)** – Each of Mexico’s 32 states is led by a governor, except Mexico City, which has a head of government. Governors are elected to a single six-year term. Candidates must be Mexican citizens by birth and have been born in the state in which they run or resided there for at least five years. Responsibilities include upholding the constitution of the state and general administration.
- **Municipal Council (*Ayuntamientos*)** – Each Mexican state is divided into a number of municipalities, each run by a municipal council. Counselors are elected every three years and, depending on state laws, may be reelected after 2021. Municipal councils are responsible for the provision of public services and public safety. Depending on the state, counselors can also be involved in areas such as education in cooperation with higher levels of government.
- **State Congress (*Congreso del Estado*)** – Every state in Mexico has a unicameral legislature with deputies elected through both proportional representation and plurality in single-member districts. Deputies serve three-year terms and will be eligible for reelection following the 2021 election. The Congress of each state assumes the legislative powers ascribed to it under that state’s constitution.

What are Mexico’s electoral authorities?

The body responsible for organizing and overseeing elections is the National Electoral Institute ([Instituto Nacional Electoral](#), INE). After the electoral reforms of 2014, the INE assumed responsibility over federal and local processes. It also delegates local processes to local public electoral bodies ([Organismos Públicos Locales Electorales](#), OPLEs).

The INE is also responsible for overseeing the public financing of political parties and political parties’ spending. The oversight process is under the responsibility of four entities:

- INE's General Council (*Consejo General*);
- Oversight Commission (*Comisión de Fiscalización*);
- Oversight Technical Unit (*Unidad Técnica de Fiscalización*); and
- OPLEs, if the INE delegates this responsibility to them.

The Electoral Tribunal of the Federal Judicial Power ([Tribunal Electoral del Poder Judicial de la Federación](#), TEPJF) is the supreme jurisdictional body for electoral matters. The TEPJF is composed of a Superior Chamber and six Regional Chambers, distributed strategically according to law. The Superior Chamber (*Sala Superior*) is composed of a presiding magistrate and six other magistrates, and each Regional Chamber (*Salas Regionales*) consists of three magistrates. The TEPJF is responsible for resolving election-related disputes and guaranteeing the legitimacy of electoral processes.

The decisions and actions taken during different stages of electoral processes are subject to strict control or judicial revision by local electoral tribunals and the TEPJF.

The third organization that works to guarantee the integrity and legitimacy of electoral processes in Mexico is the Office of the Special Prosecutor for Electoral Offenses ([Fiscalía Especializada para la Atención de Delitos Electorales](#), FEPADE). The FEPADE investigates and files criminal charges for electoral offenses according to the General Law on Electoral Offense Matters (*Ley General en Materia de Delitos Electorales*), which lists about 65 types of illegal activities related to the electoral process. The law also establishes the sentence for each offense depending on whether it is committed by citizens, electoral authorities, party officials, public servants, candidates or members of the clergy.

How are the electoral authorities protecting the elections and voters from COVID-19?

The National Electoral Institute will implement nationwide sanitary and health risk prevention measures during the June 6 midterm elections in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This includes a physical distancing requirement of 1.5 meters inside polling stations and mandatory mask use at all times in a country where only around 10 percent of the population is fully vaccinated. Only two voters will be allowed inside the polling station at a time, and poll workers will sanitize each voter's hands before and after voting, along with frequently disinfecting all surfaces. Voters are also encouraged to bring their own pens to vote.

Who is running in these elections?

Candidates from multiple political parties are running:

- *Movimiento de Regeneración Nacional*, which has been the ruling party in Mexico since its candidate won the 2018 presidential election;
- *Partido Acción Nacional*;
- *Partido Revolucionario Institucional*;
- *Partido de la Revolución*;
- *Movimiento Ciudadano*;

- *Partido del Trabajo*;
- *Partido Verde Ecologista de México*;
- *Encuentro Solidario*;
- *Redes Sociales Progresistas*; and
- *Fuerza por México*.

How are campaigns funded?

Candidates for political office in Mexico are eligible both to receive public funds and to accept private contributions. Private funding for political parties in Mexico can come from three sources: party members, supporters and candidates. For the 2021 elections, political parties can receive up to USD 5.27 million or MXN 105.06 million from party members and USD 2.15 million or MXN 42.86 million from supporters (with a limit of USD 107,937 or MEX 2.15 million per individual) or candidates.

The amount of public funding to be divided among all parties and coalitions is set at the number of registered voters, multiplied by 65 percent of the minimum wage. Of those funds, 30 percent is divided equally among all parties, and 70 percent is allocated based on each party's share of the vote in the last election for the Chamber of Deputies. In presidential election years, public funding is increased by 50 percent. The total amount of public funds available in 2021 is estimated at USD 361.7 million or MXN 7.21 billion.

The National Electoral Institute set a campaign expenditure ceiling of MXN 1.65 million or about USD 82,770 for congressional candidates. Local elections authorities set the expenditure ceilings for gubernatorial and local elections.

Mexico, however, faces a large illegal campaign finance problem. In the 2018 elections, for example, approximately 15 pesos were spent illegally (and without being [reported](#)), for every peso spent legally. While Mexican law places strict limits on private campaign finance, enforcement remains a problem. Accusations of vote buying and illegal campaign contributions are common.

Who can vote in these elections?

All Mexican citizens, by birth or naturalization, who are 18 years of age or older on Election Day are eligible to vote. Voters must possess an identification card issued by the National Electoral Institute. There are approximately 93,935,039 registered voters.

Youth will represent a large group of eligible voters this year, as 29 percent of voters are between the ages of 18 and 29. Of all eligible voters, 52 percent are women, and 48 percent are men.

There will be elections in 11 states that recognize the vote of citizens residing abroad. Citizens from Baja California Sur, Chihuahua, Colima, Guerrero, Jalisco, Mexico City, Michoacán, Nayarit, Querétaro, San Luis Potosí and Zacatecas who live abroad will be able to vote for governors, migrant deputy (in Mexico City) and Provincial Councils by proportional representation.

How will they vote?

Mexican voter identification cards list the municipality and section to which a voter belongs. With this section number, voters can call at no cost to learn where they will vote. In addition, the National Electoral Institute has partnered with Google Maps to [direct voters to their polling places](#).

Citizens can vote from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. at their voting locations. In addition, special polling places have been established so that those who are outside their normal sections on Election Day may vote. Voters will mark their choices on paper ballots that they will deposit in marked containers.

In total, there will be 164,000 polling places across Mexico, with 1.4 million poll workers.

Mexicans living abroad will be able to vote online and with mail-in ballots.

When will the newly elected government take office?

Winners of the elections will take office between October and November 2021.

How will votes be counted?

Once the polls officially close, the preliminary results (PREP) will be calculated and taken to a National Electoral Institute (INE) office. Should there be no nearby INE office, special centers will be available to receive results. PREP results will be uploaded to the internet but will not serve as official results. The original ballots and forms will travel with the PREP results to INE offices, where another count will be conducted.

All officials must sign their names to the results tabulated at the polling places. Preliminary results will be compared against district counts, which will be conducted on the Wednesday following the election. The district counts will serve as the official outcome of the election.

Poll workers are selected at random in each of the 300 electoral districts throughout Mexico. More than 12 million people were invited to be poll workers. Among them, about 1.4 million will receive training and work as poll workers on June 6.

Are there any quotas?

Yes. The Mexican constitution calls for parties to promote parity between men and women, and quotas have been set to that effect. Parties are required to establish rules that guarantee parity between men and women, and party lists must alternate between sexes in their rankings. The National Electoral Institute has the authority to reject any lists submitted by a party that are not corrected to remove an imbalance.

How are the electoral authorities guaranteeing equal access to the electoral process for persons with disabilities?

The National Electoral Institute expressed the hope that more than 150,000 polling places throughout Mexico will be equipped to assist voters with disabilities.

Can Mexicans who reside abroad vote in the elections?

Yes. Since 2005, Mexicans living abroad have been able to vote in Mexican presidential elections. Mexico has produced a [website](#) with out-of-country voting instructions. The National Electoral Institute (INE), upon application through a Mexican consulate, provides these voters with sealable mail-in ballots. Completed ballots must be received by the INE by 8:00 a.m. on June 5, 2021. There is no cost to request a voter identification card and ballot from the INE. This is the first year for online voting, which will take place between 8:00 p.m. on May 22 and 6:00 p.m. on June 6.

Is electoral observation allowed?

Yes. Citizens can apply to act as electoral observers provided that they receive training from the National Electoral Institute (INE). International organizations such as the Organization of American States have announced plans to deploy observers and provide support to the INE's own observation programs. INE has registered approximately 10,556 international and domestic observers.

Resources

- [Instituto Nacional Electoral \(National Electoral Institute\)](#)
- [Central Electoral: INE establece límites al financiamiento privado para partidos políticos nacionales y candidaturas independientes para el 2021](#)
- [Central Electoral INE determina financiamiento a partidos políticos 2021 conforme a norma constitucional](#)
- [Voto de los Mexicanos Residentes en el Exterior](#)
- [Central Electoral: Las y los CAE visitan a la ciudadanía para invitarle a ser funcionarios de casilla](#)
- [Americas Society/Council of the Americas](#)
- [Central Electoral \(Election Center\)](#)
- [Constitution of Mexico](#)
- [“El año electoral más letal de México: 90 personas asesinadas al día”](#)
- [Fondo de Apoyo a la Observación Electoral \(Funds for Electoral Observation\)](#)
- [Freedom House](#)
- [Diario AS Mexico: Encuestas Elecciones 2021: últimos resultados, favoritos y cómo van](#)
- [“Gender and Constitutionalism in Mexico: From Quotas to Parity”](#)
- [Ley General de Instituciones y Procedimientos Electorales \(Electoral Code\)](#)
- [Manual de la y el funcionario de casilla \(Election Worker’s Guide\)](#)
- [“Mexico Seeks to Empower Women in Politics”](#)
- [“¿Sabes dónde te tocará votar? Ubica tu casilla en Google Maps”](#)
- [The Electoral Knowledge Network](#)
- [Voter Roll Statistics](#)
- [Voto Extranjero \(Vote Abroad\)](#)
- [Women’s Leadership as a Route to Greater Empowerment: Mexico Case Study](#)
- [Etellekt | Análisis de Riesgos • Comunicación • Políticas Públicas](#)

About IFES in Mexico

Since 1993, the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) has collaborated with the National Electoral Institute (INE) to advance the democratic process in Mexico. IFES has observed electoral processes throughout Mexico; participated in workshops and conferences facilitated by the INE and its predecessor the Federal Electoral Institute; conducted applied, comparative research activities; and is working to promote implementation of disability rights legislation in the country. IFES and INE recently announced a renewed collaboration to strengthen the capacity of electoral institutions across Latin America to hold credible elections and combat threats to democracy such as disinformation and cyberattacks.

Disclosure

These FAQs reflect decisions made by Mexico’s election authorities as of June 2, 2021, to the best of our knowledge. This document does not represent any IFES policy or technical recommendations.