



Elections in Mexico

July 1 General Elections

Frequently Asked Questions

Latin America and the Caribbean
International Foundation for Electoral Systems

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Disclosure:
These FAQs reflect decisions made by the Mexican elections authorities as of March 12, 2012, to the best of our knowledge. This document does not represent any IFES policy or technical recommendations.

When are elections in Mexico?

The federal elections are scheduled every six years, on the first Sunday of July. This year elections are scheduled for July 1, 2012.

When does the electoral process begin?

Preparations for the election process begin the first week of October on the previous year in which elections will take place. For the 2012 elections, preparations began on October 7, 2011.

There are four stages of the electoral process during the federal elections: (1) preparation for the election; (2) Election Day; (3) results and certification of validity of the elections; and (4) the validation of the presidential election, which must conclude not later than September 6.

Who will Mexicans elect in the 2012 general elections?

Mexicans will elect a president, 128 senators and 500 federal deputies on Election Day.

The president is head of state of the Mexican government, elected by direct vote, with a simple majority, for a six-year term and no possibility for reelection. The president's term of office begins on December 1, 2012, and goes through November 30, 2018.

The Mexican Union Congress is bicameral: the (high) Chamber of Senators, elected for a six-year term, and the (lower) Chamber of Federal Deputies, elected for a three-year term. Both chambers are elected through mixed systems, using first-past-the-post (FPTP) and proportional representation (PR).

The Chamber of Senators is composed of 128 members. Each state and the Federal District can select three senators, elected by FPTP. Thirty-two senators are elected by PR on a national list.

The Chamber of Deputies is composed of 500 members. Three hundred federal deputies are elected by FPTP and 200 deputies are elected by PR with closed-party lists. For Chamber of Federal Deputies election, the country is divided into five electoral constituencies or circumscriptions.

Both Senators and Deputies can run for reelection, but not for consecutive terms.

How is Mexico politically organized?

The United States of Mexico is a democratic, federal, representative republic composed of 32 autonomous federal entities (31 states and the Federal District). Mexico has a presidential system, in which the president of Mexico is both head of state and chief of government in a multiparty system.

Executive power is held by the president. The president is advised by a cabinet composed of secretaries of state. Legislative power is vested in the Congress of the Union, a bicameral legislative body composed by the Chamber of Senators and the Chamber of Federal Deputies. Judicial power is vested in the judiciary, composed of the Supreme Court, the Federal Judiciary Council and collegial unitary and district tribunals.

What are the main political parties?

As of the 2009 election, there are eight legally registered political parties:

- PRI: Institutional Revolutionary Party (*Partido Revolucionario Institucional*)
- PRD: Democratic Revolution Party (*Partido de la Revolución Democrática*)
- PANAL: New Alliance Party (*Partido Nueva Alianza*)
- PAN: National Action Party (*Partido de Acción Nacional*)
- PT: Labor Party (*Partido del Trabajo*)
- PVEM: Green Ecological Party of Mexico (*Partido Verde Ecologista de México*)
- Convergence: (Convergence) Citizen's Movement (*Movimiento Ciudadano*)
- PSD: Social Democratic Party (*Partido Socialdemócrata*)

Who is running for president?

Enrique Peña Nieto, PRI: Peña Nieto is a lawyer and has been a member of the PRI since 1984. He has held various administrative positions in state government and was former governor of the state of Mexico. He is regarded as a strong contender for the presidency. His platform focuses on tax reform; economic growth and development; economic competition; social security; and job creation.

Andrés Manuel López Obrador, PRD: López Obrador is a political scientist and public administrator. In 2006, he ran as PRD candidate for the Mexican presidency, which resulted in a controversial victory for his opponent, Felipe Calderón. He appealed the results and mobilized large protests against the elections, but the Federal Electoral Tribunal (TEPJF) ruled the election was fair. His platform focuses on access to education and the economy.

Gabriel Quadri de la Torre, PANAL: Quadri is a civil engineer with experience in the academic and private sectors. Since 2002, he has been technical secretary of the Mexican Commission of Environmental Infrastructure. His platform focuses on modernizing the energy sector, fiscal reform, redirecting subsidies, public education, creation of technical education institutions and strengthening the agriculture and tourism sector.

Josefina Vázquez Mota, PAN: Vázquez Mota is an economist, businesswoman and politician. She became the first female presidential candidate from any of the major political parties to win the presidential primary of the PAN, with 53 percent of votes. From 2009 to 2011 she served as parliamentary coordinator of the PAN in the Chamber of Deputies. Her platform focuses on tax reform, social welfare, public health and access to quality public education.

How is election administration structured in Mexico?

The Federation and each of the 32 states have their own rules, institutions and electoral procedures. Although there are common standards, federal elections (for president, deputies and senators) and local elections (for governors, state legislators and municipal authorities) are regulated and organized separately.

Administrative duties and judicial duties are delegated to separate bodies at each level of government. At the Federal level, the Federal Electoral Institute (IFE), a public, autonomous and independent institution, has administrative responsibility (prepare, organize and conduct elections). The Electoral Tribunal, a specialized body of the federal judicial branch, has jurisdictional responsibility (resolve

disputes and enforce electoral justice) to give a final ruling on local election disputes and, in certain cases, is entitled to adopt resolutions.

At a local level, each state has its own administrative agencies, electoral courts and electoral calendar. However, in some cases, local elections are concurrent with federal elections and are held on the same date (the first Sunday in July).

Who will vote?

All registered Mexican citizens by birth or naturalization who are 18 years of age or over on the day of the election and are registered, are eligible to vote with a voting credential issued by the IFE. Currently, the electoral registry has 84,781,114 eligible voters; 48.37 percent are men and 51.63 percent are women.

Can Mexicans who reside abroad vote in the elections?

Yes, as a result of a reform measure approved in June 2005, Mexicans who are 18 years of age or over, reside abroad and have a voting credential with a picture may vote in a presidential election once registered in the out- of- state registry.

The time period to register to vote overseas was from October 1, 2011, through January 15, 2012. The voting process takes place by mail. Once the voter is registered and accepted in the registry, the IFE will send the voter the electoral ballot. The voter will then mail the envelope to the IFE in Mexico in a closed pre-paid envelope. The consulates and embassies will only assist with the registration process by providing information.

When are preliminary election results released?

Since 1994, the IFE has implemented and refined a preliminary electoral results program (PREP), which allows electronic transmission from each of the 300 district councils to the national center. Results are posted online at 8:00 p.m. on Election Day. Once these preliminary results are released, disclosure of any opinion poll results is prohibited. Therefore, usually electronic media report results of exit polls and quick counts.

When are the election results final?

The Sunday following the Election Day, the executive secretary of the General Council will present a certified copy of district tally sheets of the presidential elections and inform the General Council, in a public session, of the result by party and by candidate.

Is electoral observation allowed and regulated?

Yes, since 1993, legislation recognizes the right of Mexican citizens to participate as local observers throughout the electoral process as determined in each election by the General Counsel of the IFE. Participants must request accreditation from IFE, have no partisan affiliations and attend training workshops by the IFE or by the sponsor organization.

Similarly, since 1994, international observers are allowed to participate as observers in compliance with the guidelines and accreditation requirements set by the IFE.

Are there norms to guarantee gender equity in the nominations of candidacies?

Yes, as a result of reform measures in 2009, the law requires political parties and coalitions to include no more than 60 percent of candidates of the same sex between all candidacies presented to deputies and senators. Previously, the threshold was 70 percent.