



Fighting for the
well-being of Illinois'
youngest children.

Powered by Illinois Action for Children



What Offices Are on the Ballot?

A simple, nonpartisan guide for Illinois' early childhood
education and care community

Illinois 2026
General Election

September 2026

www.wethevillageil.org



About We, the Village



Powered by Illinois Action for Children, We, the Village is a coalition of families, caregivers, educators, and providers working together to ensure all families have access to quality education and care of their choosing.

Our Mission:

- We want adequate, equitable, sustainable, reliable funding for children's services from birth through age 5.
- We want to ensure that the early childhood workforce is adequately compensated, and that providers and educators have the resources and support they need to provide high-quality care.
- We want to ensure all children can access quality education and care, as their parents choose.



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At a Glance: Major 2026 Illinois Races

What does “nonpartisan” mean?

This guide explains public offices and their responsibilities. It does not support or oppose any candidate, political party, or ballot question.

Your exact ballot depends on where you live. Statewide races appear across Illinois, while legislative, judicial, county, and local races vary by address. Candidate lists and local ballot questions may still change before ballots are certified.

- 1 Federal:** One Illinois U.S. Senate seat and all 17 Illinois seats in the U.S. House of Representatives.
- 2 State:** Governor and Lieutenant Governor, Attorney General, Secretary of State, Comptroller, and Treasurer.
- 3 Illinois General Assembly:** All 118 State House seats and 39 of the 59 State Senate seats.
- 4 Regional, Judicial, and Local Offices:** Regional superintendents of schools, judicial elections or retention questions, county offices, county board seats, and local referenda may appear depending on your address.

What is not on this ballot?

President and Vice President are not elected in a midterm year. Most school board and municipal elections are held in Illinois’ consolidated elections, not on this November ballot.

Federal Offices

U.S. Senator



On the 2026 ballot:

One of Illinois' two U.S. Senate seats is being elected statewide.



What this office does:

Senators write and vote on federal laws and budgets. The Senate also confirms many presidential appointments, including federal judges and leaders of federal agencies.



Term and term limit:

Six years. There is no limit on the number of terms a senator may serve.



Why this matters for early childhood:

Congress decides federal funding and rules for Head Start and Early Head Start, the Child Care and Development Block Grant, Medicaid and CHIP, SNAP, tax credits, special education, and other supports for children, families, and the early childhood workforce.

U.S. Representative



On the 2026 ballot:

All 17 Illinois congressional districts elect one representative. You vote only in the district where you live.



What this office does:

Representatives write and vote on federal laws, taxes, and budgets. All federal spending bills begin in the House, and representatives provide constituent services to people in their districts.



Term and term limit:

Two years. There is no limit on the number of terms a representative may serve.



Why this matters for early childhood:

House members vote on the same major early childhood and family programs as senators. They can also advocate for district needs, question federal agencies, and shape annual funding levels.

Statewide Illinois Executive Offices

Governor and Lieutenant Governor



On the 2026 ballot:

The two candidates run together as one statewide ticket.



What this office does:

The Governor leads the executive branch, proposes the state budget, signs or vetoes bills, appoints agency leaders and board members, and oversees state agencies. The Lieutenant Governor performs duties assigned by the Governor and becomes Governor if the office becomes vacant.



Term and term limit:

Four years. Illinois does not limit the number of terms they may serve.



Why this matters for early childhood:

The Governor proposes funding for child care, preschool, Early Intervention, home visiting, and the early childhood workforce. The administration also oversees implementation through state agencies, including the Illinois Department of Early Childhood.

Attorney General



On the 2026 ballot:

One statewide seat.



What this office does:

The Attorney General is Illinois' chief legal officer. The office represents the state in court and enforces laws involving consumer protection, civil rights, charitable organizations, and other public interests.



Term and term limit:

Four years. Illinois does not limit the number of terms.



Why this matters for early childhood:

The office can affect protections for families and providers, civil rights enforcement, consumer complaints, nonprofit oversight, and lawsuits involving state programs or agency authority.

Statewide Illinois Executive Offices

Secretary of State



On the 2026 ballot:

One statewide seat.



What this office does:

The Secretary of State keeps official state records, registers businesses, provides driver and vehicle services, and supports voter registration through driver services locations.



Term and term limit:

Four years. Illinois does not limit the number of terms.



Why this matters for early childhood:

This office has less direct control over early childhood policy, but its services affect families' access to identification and voter registration and providers' access to business records and filings.

Comptroller



On the 2026 ballot:

One statewide seat.



What this office does:

The Comptroller maintains the state's central financial records and orders payments from state funds.



Term and term limit:

Four years. Illinois does not limit the number of terms.



Why this matters for early childhood:

The timing and transparency of state payments can affect grants, contracts, reimbursements, and other funding received by early childhood programs and community organizations.

Treasurer



On the 2026 ballot:

One statewide seat.



What this office does:

The Treasurer safeguards and invests state money and releases funds when ordered by the Comptroller. The office also administers certain savings and financial-access programs.



Term and term limit:

Four years. Illinois does not limit the number of terms.



Why this matters for early childhood:

State cash management can affect the stability of public funding. Treasurer programs related to savings and financial security can also affect families with young children.

Illinois General Assembly

Illinois State Senator



On the 2026 ballot:

Thirty-nine of the 59 State Senate districts are scheduled for election in 2026. Your ballot will include this race only if your district is up.



What this office does:

State senators write and vote on Illinois laws and the state budget. They also vote on many gubernatorial appointments.



Term and term limit:

Illinois Senate districts follow staggered terms of two or four years within each ten-year redistricting cycle. There is no limit on the number of terms.



Why this matters for early childhood:

State senators decide funding and policy for child care assistance, preschool, Early Intervention, home visiting, workforce compensation, family economic supports, and the Illinois Department of Early Childhood.

Illinois State Representative



On the 2026 ballot:

All 118 State Representative districts are on the ballot. You vote in the district where you live.



What this office does:

State representatives write and vote on Illinois laws, taxes, and the state budget. Revenue bills begin in the House.



Term and term limit:

Two years. There is no limit on the number of terms.



Why this matters for early childhood:

Representatives make many of the state decisions that determine who can access early childhood services, how programs are funded, what providers are paid, and what standards agencies must follow.

Regional, Judicial, & Local Offices

Regional Superintendent of Schools



On the 2026 ballot:

This office appears in regions where it has not been abolished or reorganized.



What this office does:

Regional superintendents support and monitor school districts, process educator licensure matters, inspect school buildings, and provide regional education services.



Term and term limit:

Four years. There is no statewide term limit.



Why this matters for early childhood:

The office can influence the educator pipeline, preschool programs located in schools, compliance and safety, and transitions between early childhood programs and elementary schools.

Illinois Judges



On the 2026 ballot:

Depending on your judicial district or circuit, your ballot may include a contested judicial election or a nonpartisan question asking whether a current judge should be retained.



What this office does:

Circuit courts hear most cases first. Appellate courts review circuit-court decisions. The Illinois Supreme Court is the state's highest court and oversees the state court system.



Term and term limit:

Supreme and Appellate Court judges serve ten-year terms; Circuit Court judges serve six-year terms. Judges may seek additional terms through retention elections and need 60% "yes" votes to be retained.



Why this matters for early childhood:

Courts interpret laws involving state agencies, civil rights, employment, family and child welfare, taxes, and public programs. Judges do not write the early childhood budget, but court decisions can affect how laws and protections are applied.

Regional, Judicial, & Local Offices

County and Other Local Offices



On the 2026 ballot:

The offices vary by county. Ballots may include county board members or commissioners, a county executive or board president, county clerk, sheriff, treasurer, and other local offices.



What this office does:

County boards adopt county budgets and oversee local departments and services. Other county officials administer elections, finances, public safety, records, or other county responsibilities.



Term and term limit:

Terms are usually four years, but structures vary. Illinois generally does not impose a single statewide term limit for these local offices.



Why this matters for early childhood:

Counties may fund public health, housing, transportation, mental health, family supports, and local early childhood initiatives. These services shape whether families can access and remain connected to early care and education.

Ballot Questions and Referenda



On the 2026 ballot:

State or local questions may appear depending on where you live.



What this office does:

Voters may be asked to approve or reject a proposed law, constitutional change, bond, tax, government change, or other public question.



Term and term limit:

Not an elected office. The duration and effect depend on the proposal.



Why this matters for early childhood:

Local referenda can affect school, library, public health, transportation, and community funding that supports children and families. Read the full question and any official explanation before voting.

How to learn what is on your ballot

- 1 **Check your address:** Use the Illinois polling-place or voter-registration lookup to confirm your districts and polling place.
- 2 **Find a sample ballot:** Contact your local election authority or use its website after ballots are certified.
- 3 **Compare reliable information:** Read candidates' own materials, public voting records, nonpartisan voter guides, and the full text of any ballot question.
- 4 **Ask early childhood questions:** Consider how candidates describe funding, access, affordability, workforce stability, family voice, equity, and accountability.



Official sources and verification links

1. [Illinois State Board of Elections: 2026 candidate and election materials](#)
2. [Illinois State Board of Elections: Illinois Voters' Guide](#)
3. [Illinois State Board of Elections: Find My Elected Officials](#)
4. [Illinois Constitution — State executive, legislative, and judicial powers and terms](#)
5. [USAGov: Congressional and midterm elections](#)
6. [U.S. Senate: Qualifications and terms of service](#)
7. [Illinois State Board of Elections: Polling Place Lookup](#)
8. [Illinois State Board of Elections: Local Election Authorities](#)