



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS: PROVINCIAL COUNCIL ELECTIONS

What are the roles and responsibilities of Provincial Councils?

Each of Afghanistan's 34 provinces has its own Provincial Council, composed of 9 – 33 elected members, depending on the population size of the province. Provincial Council members serve for four-year terms and play an important role in provincial affairs. They can also represent their provinces at national government level.

Working closely with the Provincial Governor, Provincial Councils hold general public meetings at least once every three months. They listen to the interests and concerns of the people in their provinces; help to resolve disputes; assist in the development of provincial policies; and manage budget expenditure. Provincial Council members also participate in determining the provincial development objectives of government in fields such as economic, social, health, education, and reconstruction; and help to improve their provinces. Ultimately, each Provincial Council will elect two of its members to serve as representatives to the *Meshrano Jirga* (upper house of the National Assembly of Afghanistan).

Who is eligible to be elected for Provincial Council?

A person is eligible to run as a candidate for Provincial Council, provided that he or she:

- Is a citizen of Afghanistan; or
- Has been a citizen for at least 10 years before applying for candidacy;
- Is 25 years of age or older on the day of nomination;
- Has not been convicted of a crime against humanity;
- Has not been deprived of his or her civil rights by a court of law;
- Neither commands nor belongs to a non-official military force;
- Has resigned from public office, in accord with Afghan laws; and
- Resides in the province that he or she seeks to represent.

How are Provincial Councilors elected?

Regardless of the number of Provincial Council seats available in each province, voters should cast one ballot, indicating one preferred candidate. The candidates receiving the most votes will be awarded seats in their respective Provincial Councils.

According to the Electoral Law, 20% of the 458 seats in each Provincial Council are specifically reserved for women (Article 30). To this end, seats are first awarded to the winning female candidates. Remaining seats are then awarded to the candidates winning the most votes, regardless of their gender.

How do citizens vote for Provincial Council members?

Eligible voters may only vote for Provincial Council candidates in their own province – as indicated on their voter card. The Provincial Council ballot is green in color and, on it, each candidate is identified by his or her name, photograph, number and a symbol that has been provided by the Independent Election Commission. If a candidate represents a political party, the name of that party will be written under their name on the ballot.