

Your Vote, Your Community: Local Offices on the Ballot

★ Mayor

The mayor is the only elected executive in a borough, and their powers include being the chief law enforcement officer, managing emergencies, voting in the borough council as a spokesperson for the community, and attending community events. Carlisle has 1 mayor who is elected for a 4-year term.

★ Borough Council

The borough council acts as a legislative body and is responsible for overseeing most municipal services. Borough councilors are responsible for adopting the budget, approving contracts, passing laws and regulations, appointing officials, leading committees, and more. If you're concerned about public safety, maintenance of local parks, public works decisions like street cleaning schedules, zoning around crosswalks or town businesses, and much more, then you're concerned about your borough council. The borough council is made up of 6 members plus the mayor. In 2025, three positions on the council are up for election, including two 4-year terms and one 2-year term.

★ Carlisle Area School Board

The school board is made up of nine members who determine policies for the school district. This includes approving classes and curriculums, budgeting, allocating funds within the district, adopting school policies on a range of issues, and more. In 2025, four school board members are up for election, each serving 4-year terms.

★ Prothonotary

The prothonotary is the Clerk of the Civil Court. In other words, they keep track of all legal records for the Court of Common Pleas. Their responsibilities involve processing passport applications, hosting naturalization ceremonies for new citizens, and making legal records accessible to the public. You can elect the prothonotary to a 4-year term.

★ Clerk of the Criminal Court

The clerk of the criminal court is in charge of the records for the Criminal Division of the Court of Common Pleas. They keep these records available to the public, and they're responsible for collecting all court fees. The clerk of the criminal court is elected for a 4-year term.

☆ Register of Wills

The Register of Wills, who also serves as the clerk of the orphans court, is a quasi-judicial authority who oversees decisions around wills and estates. They also serve as the Clerk of the Orphans' Court, which means they process and approve marriage licenses, parental rights in divorces, adoption and legal guardianship, and other important decisions. They also maintain records of all these responsibilities, with files of these documents going back centuries. The Register of Wills is elected to a 4-year term.

☆ Coroner

The Coroner's job is investigating sudden, unexplained, violent, or suspicious deaths. This position is elected for 4 years.

☆ Sheriff

The sheriff is the highest-ranking law enforcement officer in the county. Once elected, they have the power to transport prisoners to court appearances, act on court warrants, enforce laws, issue licenses to carry concealed firearms, assist other law enforcement agencies like local police departments, appoint deputy sheriffs, act as security officers at courts and other county properties, and more. Cumberland County has 1 sheriff elected for a 4-year term.

☆ Controller

The controller supervises all of the county's money. This involves keeping track of all fiscal transactions in the county, from tracking budgets to managing retirement funds to preventing fraud. Just like how you'd want a personal accountant with access to your checking or savings accounts to be trustworthy and responsible, it's important to elect a controller who you trust to handle the county's taxpayer dollars and spending on the services you enjoy. The controller serves a 4-year term.

☆ Recorder of Deeds

The recorder of deeds keeps track of all real estate documents for the county, like deeds and mortgages. While most Dickinson students don't own property in Cumberland County, this elected official is also responsible for keeping all real estate records (dating back to 1750) public, meaning if you're curious about archives of changes to property or economics throughout the county's history, this is the office to visit. The recorder of deeds is elected to a 4-year term.

☆ Judge of Elections

The Judge of Elections is responsible for making sure all elections in Cumberland County are fair, efficient, and secure. From registering voters to identifying polling places to training election officials, they oversee all aspects of the voting process. It's important to pay attention to this office because their decisions can impact the accessibility and integrity of our elections.

☆ Inspector of Elections

The Inspectors of Elections help make sure elections run smoothly by making sure all voters are registered, and all voting machines accurately count votes. Like the Judge of Elections, it's important that the Inspector of Elections is someone you will be happy to be helped by on election day.

☆ Judges

In Pennsylvania, judges are elected by voters. In 2025, candidates are running for Judge of the Superior Court, Judge of the Commonwealth Court, and Judge of the Court of Common Pleas. The first time a judge runs for their position, they run as a Democrat or a Republican. They serve a 10-year term, and if they want to run for office again, voters are asked during the general election in November if they want to retain these judges, AKA keep them in their position on the court, or hold another election to replace them. Retention elections are nonpartisan, and make sure to keep a lookout for some important retention elections in the fall. Because judges on these courts determine important social and political issues that govern your daily life, it is important to carefully choose which judges you vote for to make sure Pennsylvania's justice system will stand up for the laws and values you believe in.

☆ How can you get involved?

Vote! The primary election is on May 20th, after most students have left campus. If you're registered to vote in Carlisle but won't be here for election day, you can request a mail-in or absentee ballot by May 13th—and make sure it's returned to the county by 8pm on May 20th. If you're not registered to vote at your Dickinson address but would like to be, Dickinson Votes can help you register by the May 5th deadline.

☆ How can you learn more?

Want to learn more about what these offices do and who's on the ballot? Check out the Cumberland County Democrat or Republican party websites, reach out to candidates and your current representatives, or even attend a borough council or school board meeting to see your votes in action! And, of course, you can always reach out to Dickinson Votes.



In the fall, winners of the primary will progress to the general election on November 4th. Make sure you stay tuned to vote in that election too!