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Cuba Prepares for Municipal Elections

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Cubans continued Thursday the process of nominating candidates for the upcoming municipal elections.

The selection process for candidates began nationwide on Tuesday, and will continue until March 25.

According to the National Electoral Council (CNE), 167,263 Cubans have already stepped forward as potential candidates. Around 44 percent of the hopefuls are women. The final candidates will vie for positions in Cuba's 12,589 municipal councils, with between two and eight candidates required by law for each position.

Any of Cuba's roughly 8 million eligible voters can run, but not along party lines. Municipal elections are strictly non-partisan, and very little campaigning takes place. Instead, candidates are expected to woo voters familiar with their track records as responsible members of the community, rather than through the kinds of expensive publicity campaigns common in Western nations.

After candidates have been selected, voting will take place on April 19. Run off votes will be held on April 26 for any positions where no candidate secured more than 50 percent of the vote.

The municipal elections are one of three tiers of voting in Cuba's government, along with provincial and national elections. Municipal level voting takes place once every two and a half

years.

Since the mid 1970s, all municipal elections have had turnouts above 90 percent of eligible voters, though voting isn't compulsory in Cuba. According to government figures, the last municipal level elections in 2012 saw turnout just over 90 percent – similar levels to the national and provincial elections of 2013.

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