

# VOTER GUIDE

FAQ

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

ABOUT  
**VOTING**  
IN PENNSYLVANIA



[Everyone.VotesPA.com](http://Everyone.VotesPA.com)

# 1

## VOTER ELIGIBILITY: I WANT TO VOTE! AM I ELIGIBLE?

- **You can register to vote in Pennsylvania if you are:**
  - A citizen of the United States for at least one month before the election.
  - At least 17 years old and will be 18 years old by the next election.
  - A resident of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and your election district for at least 30 days prior to the election.
- **What if I have a felony conviction?**
  - If you are incarcerated on Election Day as a result of a felony conviction, you are not entitled to vote.
  - Your voting rights are automatically restored upon release from incarceration (that is, not in prison).
  - You should re-register to vote if you were incarcerated for a long period of time. Check your registration status at [votesPA.com/status](https://votesPA.com/status).

# 2

## VOTER REGISTRATION: I'M ELIGIBLE! HOW DO I REGISTER?

- **You may already be registered!**

Make sure you are registered at your current address. Check your voter registration status at [votesPA.com/status](https://votesPA.com/status).

- **You can NOW register ONLINE to vote in Pennsylvania!**

Go to [register.votesPA.com](https://register.votesPA.com).

- ✗ Fill out and submit the voter registration application.
- ✗ Use your application number to track your application.
- ✗ Once your registration is approved, your county voter registration office will mail a voter registration card to your residence.

- **In person:**

- You can register in person at your county voter registration office. To find your county voter registration office, go to [votesPA.com/county](https://votesPA.com/county).
- When applying for or renewing a driver's license or non-driver photo ID at PennDOT.



[register.votesPA.com](https://register.votesPA.com)

- At any Pennsylvania public assistance agency, orphans' court, marriage license bureau, any agency providing state-funded services to persons with disabilities, and all armed forces recruitment centers.

- **By mail:**

- You can obtain a voter registration form at your county voter registration office and various locations around the commonwealth.
- You can also download the voter registration application at [votespa.com](https://votespa.com). Print, complete, sign, and deliver or mail to your county voter registration office.

- **What if I've moved since I registered to vote?**

- If you registered in Pennsylvania and moved within Pennsylvania, you should change your address either online at [register.votesPA.com](https://register.votesPA.com) or by using a paper registration form.
- If you registered in another state and then moved to Pennsylvania, you must register to vote in Pennsylvania as a new voter.

**NOTE:** The deadline to register to vote or to change your address is 30 days before an election.

- If you moved within Pennsylvania and failed to update your registration with your new address, you may vote **one more time** at the polling place of your former residence. You must update your address at that time.

## 3

### WHO CAN VOTE AN ABSENTEE BALLOT?

- Voters who are serving in the armed forces, Merchant Marine, or who are outside the United States because of business, and their accompanying spouses and dependents.
- Voters who are absent from their municipality during the time the polls are open because of work.
- Voters who cannot attend their polling place because of illness or disability or veterans who are bedridden or hospitalized.
- Voters who are county employees and cannot vote at the polling place because of their duties relating to the conduct of the election.
- Voters who cannot attend because of observance of a religious holiday.
- Voters and their accompanying spouses who are absent due to a leave of absence or sabbatical leave.
- Voters who are absent because they are on vacation.
- Voters who are college students and are attending school away from home.



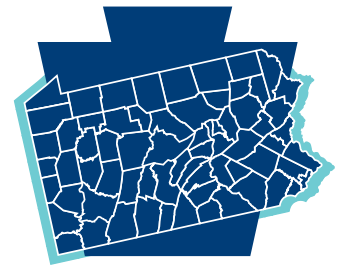
- Go to [votesPA.com](https://votespa.com) for more information about absentee voting.

## 4 HOW DO I REQUEST AN ABSENTEE BALLOT?

- **You can request an absentee ballot by:**

- Sending a letter or other signed document (such as the county's official application for requesting an absentee ballot) to the county board of elections in the county in which you are registered.
- Applying in person.
- Completing any form supplied by the federal government.
- Completing any official county board of elections form that is addressed to Pennsylvania's Secretary of the Commonwealth or county board of elections of the county in which you reside.

You can download an absentee ballot application form on [votespa.com/absentee](https://votespa.com/absentee). Print, complete, sign, and deliver or mail the application to your local county election office. The address and telephone number for your local county elections and voter registration office may be found using the **County Information Link** at [votespa.com/county](https://votespa.com/county).



- The county board of elections must **receive** your application for absentee ballot no later than **5:00 p.m. on the Tuesday before the election. A postmark is not sufficient.**
- **Because of late delivery by the U.S. Postal Service, the Department of State (DOS) recommends that voters submit their absentee ballot applications at least two weeks before the election.**

## 5 WHAT IS THE DEADLINE FOR RETURNING MY VOTED ABSENTEE BALLOT?

- **Your county board of elections must receive your voted absentee ballot by 5:00 p.m. on the Friday before the election. A postmark is not sufficient.**
- If you must submit your application for an absentee ballot on the Tuesday before the election, DOS recommends that you return your voted absentee ballot in person.
- In emergency situations (such as an unexpected illness or disability), you can submit an Emergency Application for Absentee Ballot, which must be received by your county board of elections no later than 5:00 p.m. on the Friday before Election Day.
- In an emergency situation that occurs after 5:00 p.m. on the Friday before Election Day, you can submit an Emergency Application for Absentee Ballot to your County Court.

You can find complete instructions on how to vote absentee by clicking on the **absentee ballot** link on **votespa.com**.

# 6 VOTING: WHAT HAPPENS AT THE POLLS?

- **How do I find my polling place?**

- Your polling place location is printed on your voter registration card.
- Call your county voter registration office.
- Look it up online at **votespa.com/pollingplace**.



- **When are the polls open on Election Day?**

- The polls are open from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. If you are in line when the polls close, you are entitled to vote.

- **Do I need any identification (ID) to vote?**

- Only voters who are voting for the first time in their election district need to show ID. Acceptable ID includes both photo and non-photo ID.

- **Acceptable photo IDs for first-time voters:**

- Driver's license, U.S. passport, military ID, student ID, employee ID, any ID issued by the U.S. government or commonwealth agency.

- **Acceptable non-photo IDs for first-time voters:**

- Voter registration card, firearm permit, current utility bill, current bank statement, current paycheck, government check, or any non-photo ID issued by the commonwealth or federal government.
- Non-photo ID must have your address on it.

- **What if my name isn't in the poll book?**

- The local officials should call the county board of elections to determine if you are registered. If you are, you should be able to vote normally.

- **What if I'm in the wrong precinct?**

- If you are registered but in the wrong precinct, you should go to the correct precinct.

- **What if the county board of elections cannot find my name?**

- If you believe you were registered and omitted from the poll book, you may vote a provisional ballot.

- **What is a provisional ballot?**

- A provisional ballot is a paper ballot which should be provided to voters who believe they are registered voters but whose names are not on the rolls, or first-time voters who do not provide ID at the polls on Election Day.

- **Can my right to vote be challenged?**

- Yes, but only for certain reasons and by certain people. A poll worker, poll watcher, or other voter may only challenge a voter on the grounds that the voter does not live in the precinct or the voter is not the person the voter says he or she is.
- The voter may still vote normally by signing a challenge affidavit and producing a witness to vouch for him or her.

- **Can someone assist me at the polls?**

- You have the right to assistance if you cannot read or write; cannot read the names on the ballots; have difficulty understanding English; or are blind, disabled, or unable to operate the voting machine.
- You may request help from a relative, friend, neighbor, or another voter.
- You do **not** need to be designated in the poll book-district register as “assistance permitted” to receive this assistance.
- If you want assistance, you must sign an Assistance Declaration, unless the poll book already indicates “assistance permitted.” You also have the right to refuse assistance.

- **Who can be inside the polling place?**

- Only precinct election officials, clerks, machine inspectors, watchers, no more than 10 persons in the process of voting, persons lawfully giving assistance to voters, and police officers in the act of voting or who have been called to the polling place to preserve the peace, are allowed inside or within 10 feet of the polling place while voting is in progress. Everyone else, including individuals handing out campaign literature, must remain at least 10 feet away.

- **What happens if I am intimidated at the polls?**

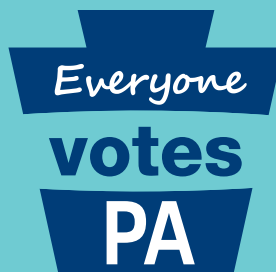
- In Pennsylvania it is illegal for any person or corporation through intimidation or coercion to induce or compel a person to vote or refrain from voting for a particular candidate or on a particular political issue.
- If you have experienced intimidation at the polls, you can call the District Attorney’s office and notify the county board of elections. You can also submit a complaint through the Department of State’s website at [votesPA.com](https://www.votesPA.com), which will be forwarded to your county board of elections.

# QUESTIONS?

**CALL YOUR COUNTY  
VOTER REGISTRATION  
OFFICE OR CALL  
1-877-VOTESPA  
(1-877-868-3772)**

For assistance with the  
Pennsylvania Department of State's  
web application, call the  
Help Desk at 1-866-472-7873.

To download the  
Everyone votesPA tool kit,  
visit our website:



**[Everyone.votesPA.com](http://Everyone.votesPA.com)**

The Department of State gratefully  
acknowledges Advancement Project for  
providing source materials for this document.