

# Guide to Registering Voters

## Voter Registration Instructions

The voter registration form can be downloaded from the Secretary of State (SoS) or any City Clerk site. The form is very straightforward, as can be seen from the following instructions. Nevertheless, you must review the completed form for errors before the voter walks away.

1. Writing must be legible!
2. Voter must use their legal name, i.e., the name that appears on their ID. If the voter changes their name, they will have to update their registration.
3. There is a section at the top of the form that asks if the voter is a U.S. citizen; if the person completing the form is not a U.S. citizen, they are not eligible to vote. The appropriate box must be selected.
4. There is also a box at the top of the form that asks if the voter will be at least 18 years of age or older on or before Election Day. Please note that many people older than 18 accidentally check “no” because they think it is asking if they are *currently* 18. They should check yes if they are 18 *OR older*. If they are going to be 18 on or before the next election, they can still register to vote. The appropriate box must be selected.
5. Voters have the option of entering either their state ID/Drivers License number OR the last 4 digits of their social security number; they do not need both and do not need a physical copy of either document on hand. If they have never been issued a SS number or state ID, they should contact their local clerk (simply checking the box saying they have no ID is not enough, as there are requirements to prove residency. This situation comes up very rarely).
6. Voters must put down their full birthday including year.
7. According to state law, forms *can* be processed without gender indicated. If a voter does not indicate a gender, you can still submit the form.
8. Voters can register without putting down their phone number or email address. *However*, it is very helpful to have for two reasons: if the clerk can’t read something, they need to be able to reach the voter, and; having a number/email allows us to follow up and remind people to vote.
9. The form must be SIGNED and DATED. Many people put their birthday instead of the date: please check for errors.

## Absentee Ballot/Request to be on the Permanent Absentee Ballot List

1. All voters are eligible to receive an absentee ballot. *No reason is needed.*
2. Statistically, people are more likely to vote if they receive an absentee ballot.
3. Most communities have a Permanent Absentee Application list. Being on the permanent list means that before every election the local clerk will mail you an “Application for Absent Voter Ballot” that you must return and then the clerk will mail you the actual ballot. In other words, being on the permanent list does

NOT mean that you will automatically receive a ballot; it means you will receive an *application* for a ballot.

4. Use the attached form to sign people up for the Permanent Absentee Application list. Do not use any other form including the one that can be downloaded from the Secretary of State or City Clerk sites. (This is not an application for a ballot. It is a request to be added to the permanent list. We do not want to handle the actual applications for absentee ballots because there are restrictions on soliciting those. But there are no restrictions on soliciting requests to be on a permanent absentee application list. Just be sure that you are using the attached request form and not the actual application form that is on the Secretary of State and city/township clerk websites. )
5. Writing must be legible!
6. If the voter wants to be on the permanent absentee application list, they should check the appropriate box at the top of the form.
7. Check to make sure that voters fill out their registered address (usually the address listed on the voter's state issued ID).
8. If the voter wants their ballot application mailed to a different address, have them fill out the bottom part of the form.
9. Be sure that the voter signs and dates the form.

### **Completed Forms**

Data from completed forms should be entered into the Fems For Change voter database. This is so we can contact voters before the election and remind them to vote, make sure they know their polling location, and/or confirm that they have received an absentee ballot.

Please return your forms to whoever is organizing your voter registration drive so we can enter the data and then deliver the forms to the appropriate clerks. Requests to be on the permanent list must be received by the City Clerk at least 15 business days prior to the election.

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

#### ***I'm not sure whether or not I am registered to vote?***

If anyone is not sure whether or not they are registered, they can easily check on their phone. There are many different sites that allow you to check your registration status. When in doubt, register to vote! There is no harm in submitting a registration form even if the person was already registered.

[www.vote.org](http://www.vote.org)

I like this site because its so easy to remember. Also, they will send an email reminding voters about upcoming elections.

<https://mvic.sos.state.mi.us/>

I like this site because it also gives you the location of your polling place and the dates of upcoming elections in Michigan.

***If I've registered in the past, do I need to register again?***

Technically, once a person registers to vote, they should not need to re-register unless they move. However, every year many people get purged from the voter roles, so if someone has not voted in the last election, it's a good idea to double check even if they have voted in the past. You can check your registration status at one of the sites listed above. When in doubt, register to vote! There is no harm in submitting a registration form even if the person was already registered.

***I do not have a voter registration card or photo ID. Can I still vote?***

You do not need a voter registration card or any ID in order to vote. If you don't have a voter registration card, you can go to <https://mvic.sos.state.mi.us/> to confirm that you are registered and to find your polling location. If you don't have ID, or don't have it with you at your polling location, you can sign an affidavit/

***I'm living somewhere temporarily and I want to vote in the local elections?***

This is most likely to come up with college students. You are allowed to register to vote in your temporary community even if you have not yet changed your driver's license/state ID. However, if someone has a Michigan driver's license or State ID and they register to vote using an address that is different from the one on their license/ID (for example their college dorm or college apartment), then their license/ID address will automatically be changed to match their voter registration. In this case, the SoS will send the voter a sticker with the new address to affix to their license. If your permanent address is out of the state of Michigan, registering in Michigan will then surrender your out-of-state license. These things can impact your auto insurance. It is not up to us to recommend what address someone should use, however people choosing to register at a temporary address (e.g. their college campus) should understand the implications.

***I'm a college student from another state. Can I vote in my home state?***

If your permanent address is in a different state, you must contact the local clerk of your home state to obtain an absentee ballot.

***I'm already registered, but I moved. What do I do?***

You can update your address using the basic Voter Registration form.

***I am about to legally change my name, which name should I use?***

People must register using the name that appears on their official ID. When they change their name, they will need to update their registration. If the voter has a Michigan license/State ID, name changes must be made at a SoS branch office.

***I am homeless. Can I register to vote?***

Yes! Every citizen 18 years old and over has the right to vote. A person who is homeless can use an address or description of the location where they usually stay.

(For example, “Park across the street from the Masonic Temple, Detroit”) They can also use the address of a shelter. If possible, include a mailing address. The last two lines of the form’s middle section asks for “mailing address.” A mailing address allows the Clerk to mail a voter registration card with polling location information. Churches, Food Banks and shelters often allow people to use their mailing address. If someone does not have any mailing address, it is advisable for them to go to their local clerk and register in person. You can still register them, but they won’t receive a Voter Registration card and it might be difficult for them to confirm that they are registered or know where their polling location is.

***I will turn 18 on election day. Can I register to vote?***

Any citizen who will be 18 years old on or before election day can register to vote.

***I will turn 18 the day after the election. Can I still vote?***

No. Voters must be at least 18 years old on election day.

***I have a felony record and/or I am currently on probation. Am I allowed to vote?***

In the state of Michigan, if a person is not currently serving a sentence, they are allowed to vote. The moment someone is released from prison, they are allowed to vote. People who are on parole or probation or paying restitution are allowed to vote. Returning citizens should register to vote even if they were registered before being incarcerated. People who are in jail awaiting a trial or awaiting a verdict also have the right to vote. Those awaiting trial/verdict can register to vote and request an absentee ballot.

***I have permanent residency status, am I allowed to vote?***

No. You must be a citizen of the US to be eligible to vote. People with a Green Card, permanent resident status, or any type of temporary visa does not qualify a person to vote.

***I will be taking my Citizenship Oath before election day, am I allowed to register now?***

No. You must be a citizen in order to register to vote.

***How long do I have to live in Michigan before I can register to vote?***

You must be a resident of Michigan for at least 30 days prior to Election Day in order to be eligible to vote in any Michigan election. If you will have been in Michigan for at least 30 days by Election Day, then you can register to vote.

***After I sign up for the Permanent Absentee Application List, will my City Clerk automatically send me a ballot every year?***

Once you submit a request to be placed on the Permanent Absentee Application list, prior to every election your City Clerk will send you an “Absentee Ballot Application.” You will need to submit this application every time you wish to receive a Ballot. After the Clerk receives this form, they will send you the actual Ballot.

***If I request to be on the Permanent Absentee Application list, does that mean I'm not allowed to vote in person?***

If you want to vote in person, simply don't mail back the "Absentee Ballot Application." This will not remove you from the Permanent Absentee Ballot list and you will still receive an Application for an Absentee Ballot before future elections.

***Am I allowed to vote early?***

There are two ways to vote early by absentee ballot: either by mail, or by going in person to the local clerk's office. Absentee ballots are supposed to be mailed 45 days before Election Day, and they are available in clerks' offices starting then. You can vote early in the clerk's office up through 4 pm the Monday before Election Day.

***When do I need to return my Absentee Ballot?***

All ballots must be received by your Clerk by 8pm Election Day. If you are mailing it, allow seven business days. You can also return it to your Clerk's office in person.

***Can you fill out the form for me?***

If someone is unable to complete their own form, you are allowed to help them, but the voter must sign it.

***I still have more questions. Where can I go for answers?***

This site has some great resources: <https://www.aclumich.org/en/know-your-rights/voting>

***I'd like to register other people to vote. Am I allowed to do that?***

Anyone is allowed to help other people register to vote. If you want to host your own voter registration drive, feel free to contact one of the many organizations that focuses on voter registration for help. If you want to do it on your own, please familiarize yourself with all of the regulations. Remember that every form must go to the City Clerk where the person lives. If you don't have time to get all of the forms to the appropriate clerks, then don't register others, however you can still give people the forms and instructions.

