

**I-866-OUR-VOTE  
(1-866-687-8683)****Disclaimer:**

This guide is designed for informational purposes only. It is not legal advice and is not intended to create an attorney-client relationship. The Election Protection Coalition does not warrant any information contained in this guide, nor does the Coalition suggest that the information in this guide should be used as a basis to pursue legal advice or decision making.

**VOTER REGISTRATION FORMS****1) Where can voter registration forms be obtained?**

There are several ways to get a voter registration form.

The form in English can be downloaded from the State of Connecticut Secretary of State website at <http://www.ct.gov/sots/LIB/sots/ElectionServices/SelectForms/electforms/ed671.pdf>.

The form in Spanish can be downloaded from the State of Connecticut Secretary of State website at <http://www.ct.gov/sots/LIB/sots/ElectionServices/SelectForms/electforms/ed671sp.pdf>.

Application forms also are available at the Department of Social Services, the Labor Department, the Department of Motor Vehicles, public libraries, and post-secondary state school libraries (such as state universities). Further, the Department of Motor Vehicles must provide voter registration application forms to every applicant for a new driver's license, a renewal, or state ID card.

**2) Are there restrictions on copying voter registration forms?**

No, there are no express restrictions on copying registration forms.

**3) Are there restrictions on the use of the National Voter Registration Form?**

The National Voter Registration form may be used in Connecticut. See page 10 of <http://www.fabnit.com/nvra-update-09-12-06.pdf> for fields that may be left blank, including voter identification number, race/ethnicity, and cross streets.

**4) Are there restrictions regarding the use of registration form information?**

All registration applications are available as public records and are available for inspection by any person during business hours (although they may be destroyed after five years).

**5) Are there restrictions regarding pre-filling information on registration forms?**

No, there are no express restrictions on pre-filling information on registration forms.

**COMPLETING VOTER REGISTRATION FORMS****6) How long must you live in a county before you are eligible to register to vote?**

There is no minimum amount of time required to live in a county or town before one is eligible to vote. The only requirement is that you be a "bona fide resident" which means your "dwelling unit" is located within the state of Connecticut.

**7) Are there any restrictions on registering to vote using a P.O. Box, college campus, or dorm address?**

The registration application requires the listing of a bona fide residence, which would probably preclude a P.O. Box, however it would include a college residence. A bona fide resident is someone whose “dwelling unit” is located within the state of Connecticut. An applicant indicates this by listing their street number and address. Failure to indicate residence will result in the termination of an application.

**8) If I enter or leave the state because of work or school, can I register to vote?**

Use of any address, including a college address, should be permissible provided that you can claim your college address as your “dwelling unit.” See Question 7.

**9) Are there any identification requirements to register to vote?**

No.

However, a voter can avoid having to bring identification with them to vote, by providing it at the time of registration. To do so a voter should provide:

- (1) a copy of a current and valid photo ID,
- (2) a copy of a current utility bill, bank statement, government check, paycheck or government document indicating name and address,
- (3) a valid Connecticut driver’s license number, or
- (4) the last four digits of their Social Security number

However, if the voter only provides a driver’s license number or the last four digits of a Social Security number, these numbers must match a Connecticut identification record.

**10) Are there any identification requirements in order to vote?**

Yes.

If you have previously voted in Connecticut or are a first time voter that has followed the steps outlined in Question 9, you are required to fill out a form including name, address, and signature. Alternatively you can present a Social Security card or any other identification card that has both your name and either address, signature or photograph.

If you are a first time voter and have not followed the steps in Question 9, you are required to show either a current and valid photo identification that indicates name and address or a copy of a current utility bill bank statement, government check, paycheck or other government document that shows your name and address.

**11) What are the rules regarding missing or illegible information on registration forms?**

The absence of the following information will result in the rejection of an application: (1) signature, (2) date of birth or (3) address. There is a box a voter must check to identify herself as a United States citizen. If the voter fails to check either “yes” or “no,” then the registrar is required to contact the voter to offer an opportunity to affirm or deny citizenship. Lack of a zip code or Social Security number cannot result in a rejection. An illegible address or date of birth MAY constitute a “failure to indicate” certain information and result in rejection.

**12) Can a person whose name has changed since registering vote on Election Day?**

The form used to register to vote (as well as the National Voter Registration Form) can also be used to indicate a name change. See Questions 1 and 3. However, if you did not submit the form before the

deadline to register, we recommend that you contact your nearest Registrar Office to inform them of the change and bring official documentation indicating the change with you to vote. Phone numbers for your nearest office can be found at <http://www.ct.gov/sots/LIB/sots/ElectionServices/lists/ROVOfficeAddresses.pdf>.

## **REGISTERING OTHERS TO VOTE**

### **13) What are the laws regarding third-party registration?**

There is no explicit time limit mentioned for third-parties to submit voter registration applications, but the Connecticut election code requires that anyone who is entrusted with the voter registration application of another must return the application “immediately”. Third parties may either mail completed registration applications or return them in person to the office of the Registrar of Voters or the office of the town clerk of the applicant's town of residence. Those engaged in third-party voter registration efforts need not register with the State. However, the Secretary of State recommends in its guidelines for voter registration, entitled “How to Register Voters”, that anyone engaging in a voter drive inform the local Registrar of Voters. The “How to Register Voters” manual is available online at: <http://www.ct.gov/sots/LIB/sots/ElectionServices/HAVA/HavaPDF/HowToRegisterVotersEng.pdf>

For absentee ballot applications, there are restrictions applied upon third-parties. Persons who plan on distributing five or more absentee ballot applications must register with the town clerk. Any person distributing absentee ballot applications must also maintain a list of the names and addresses of prospective absentee ballot applicants who receive such applications, and must file such list with the town clerk prior to the date of the election. Any person who distributes absentee ballot applications and receives an executed application must file the application with the town clerk.

### **14) Are there any laws regarding submission of voter registration forms by individuals receiving compensation?**

There are no express provisions prohibiting the submission of voter registration forms by individuals receiving compensation. However, as for the submission of absentee ballot applications, no person is permitted to pay or give any compensation to another solely for distributing absentee ballot applications or for assisting any person in the execution of an absentee ballot.

### **15) Is training required for voter registration drives?**

No. There is no express training requirement. Guidelines for how to run a voter registration drive are provided by the Secretary of State’s Office in their manual entitled “How to Register Voters”, which is available at:

<http://www.ct.gov/sots/LIB/sots/ElectionServices/HAVA/HavaPDF/HowToRegisterVotersEng.pdf>

### **16) Are volunteers or staff of voter registration drives required to be county or state residents?**

No, they are not.

## **REGISTRATION DEADLINES**

### **17) What is the deadline to register to vote?**

For the 2008 general election, all mail-in voter registration applications must be postmarked by Tuesday, October 21, 2008. All hand-delivered mail-in registration applications must also be received by the Registrar of Voters by October 21, 2008. Connecticut requires that all mail-in voter registration applications be postmarked or received by a voter registration agency by the 14<sup>th</sup> day before the election (October 21, 2008). The deadline for in-person registration at the registrar’s office is the 7<sup>th</sup>

day before the election (October 28, 2008). However, those whose qualifications as to age, citizenship, or residence in the municipality only matured after the October 28 deadline may apply to register in person at a registrar's office or town clerk's office through November 2, 2008 (the last weekday prior to the election).

**18) Must organizations or individuals engaged in voter registration drives submit their forms within a certain period of time?**

Yes. The Connecticut election code requires that anyone who is entrusted with the voter registration application of another must return the application "immediately".

**19) Is Election Day registration allowed?**

Generally, Election Day registration is not permitted. However, for presidential voting, Election Day registration is permitted.

For most types of voting, other than presidential voting, if a citizen submits their mail-in voter registration after the October 21, 2008 mail registration deadline or attempts to register in-person after the October 28, 2008 in-person registration deadline, the ability to vote does not attach until November 5, 2008 (election day is Tuesday November 4, 2008) or until the application is approved by registrar, whichever is later.

However, for presidential voting, Connecticut allows unregistered citizens to vote on Election Day via a "presidential ballot" so long as they are a bona fide town resident, a U.S. citizen who is at least 18 years old, and have not forfeited their electoral privileges because of a disfranchising crime. In addition, if applying for a "presidential ballot" in person or by mail, it is required that the applicant present either a current and valid photo identification or a copy of a current utility bill, bank statement, government check, paycheck or other government document that shows the name and address of the voter. Under Connecticut law, voters can apply for a presidential ballot from the town clerk up until the time the polls close on Election Day. Once a voter has applied for a "presidential ballot", if the town clerk is satisfied that the application is proper and that the applicant is qualified to vote, the clerk will then give or mail to the applicant, as the case may be, a "presidential ballot" along with instructions for its return. Using a "presidential ballot" is not necessarily considered registering as a voter, but it does allow a citizen to vote in a presidential election even if they have failed to register to vote.

You cannot apply for a "presidential ballot" at a polling place. Applying for a "presidential ballot" on Election Day requires going to the local town hall rather than a polling place. All "presidential ballots" must be returned to the town clerk rather than to a polling place.

In the 2000 Election, the first year when voting on Election Day via a "presidential ballot" became available, there were reports of long lines at town halls around the state on Election Day. To avoid this inconvenience, unregistered voters can apply by mail for a "presidential ballot" beginning 45 days prior to the election from the municipal clerk of the town in which the voter is qualified to vote.

**20) Does state election law allow for early or absentee voting?**

For Absentee Voting: An eligible voter may vote by absentee ballot only if he or she is unable to make it to the polling place during the scheduled voting hours for one of the following enumerated reasons:

- (1) His/her active service with the armed forces of the United States;
- (2) His/her absence from the town of his/her voting residence during all of the hours of voting;
- (3) His/her illness;
- (4) His/her physical disability;

- (5) The tenets of his/her religion forbid secular activity on the day of the primary, election or referendum; or
- (6) The required performance of his/her duties as a primary, election or referendum official at a polling place other than his/her own during all of the hours of voting at such primary, election or referendum.

On the absentee ballot application, the applicant will be asked to indicate which of these categories applies to their absentee request. The absentee ballot applicant will also be required to sign a statement indicating that they are being truthful in their application, under penalty of false statement if they are in fact being untruthful. An absentee ballot, in order to be cast, must be received by the town clerk by certain deadlines which vary based on who is submitting the absentee ballot and in what manner the ballot is being returned. If an absentee ballot is mailed in, it must be received by the close of the polls.

If the absentee ballot is returned in-person, it may only be returned by either the applicant themselves, a member of the applicant's immediate family, or, in the case of physically disabled voters, the designee of the disabled voter. If the absentee ballot is returned in person by a member of the absentee voter's immediate family, it must also be submitted by the close of the polls. If a qualified designee of an ill or physically disabled absentee voter submits the ballot in person, it must also be received by the close of the polls. However, if an absentee ballot is returned in person by the absentee voter herself, then it must be received by the day before the election, November 3, 2008.

Absentee ballots may be obtained from the Connecticut Secretary of State's website at the following web address:

[http://www.ct.gov/sots/cwp/view.asp?a=3179&q=392218&SOTSNav\\_GID=1846](http://www.ct.gov/sots/cwp/view.asp?a=3179&q=392218&SOTSNav_GID=1846).

A member of the absentee voter's immediate family is defined as a dependent relative who resides in the individual's household or any spouse, child or parent of the individual. A qualified designee of an ill or physically disabled absentee voter is defined as (1) a person who is caring for the applicant because of the applicant's illness or physical disability, including but not limited to, a licensed physician or a registered or practical nurse, (2) a member of the applicant's family, who is designated by an absentee ballot applicant and who consents to such designation, or (3) if no such person consents or is available, then a police officer, registrar of voters, deputy registrar of voters or assistant registrar of voters in the municipality in which the applicant resides.

For Early Voting: Early voting in person is not permitted in Connecticut. However, early voting by mail using an absentee ballot is permitted under certain specified circumstances. Any registered voter who is living, or expects to be living or traveling outside of the United States on Election Day may apply for a blank absentee ballot to vote for all offices being contested at an election. Any member of the armed forces who is a registered voter or has applied to become a registered voter, or the armed service member's spouse or dependent if living where such member is stationed, may apply for a blank absentee ballot to vote for all offices being contested at an election. The application to be submitted to the municipal clerk is the same as the regular absentee voting application mentioned above, and can be obtained at: [http://www.ct.gov/sots/cwp/view.asp?a=3179&q=392218&SOTSNav\\_GID=1846](http://www.ct.gov/sots/cwp/view.asp?a=3179&q=392218&SOTSNav_GID=1846).

Once a complete list of candidates becomes available, the municipal clerk will issue the ballot approximately 45 days prior to the election to those who have applied for absentee ballots due to either their service in the armed forces or their temporarily traveling or residing outside of the United States. The clerk shall include with the ballot a complete list of the offices to be voted upon, the number of individuals for which each voter may vote, the candidates, and the party designation of each candidate.

## **VOTER REGISTRATION LEGISLATION**

### **21) Is there any pending legislation that affects voter registration? If so, where is it in the legislative process?**

Yes, there are a few pieces of pending legislation relevant to voter registration:

Connecticut Senate Bill No. 444, which has been passed by the Senate and is awaiting vote in the House, affects the rights of disabled voters. Under the proposed legislation, disabled voters are made eligible for permanent absentee ballot status. Until they either are removed from the town's official registry list or request to no longer receive the ballots, voters with this status will receive an absentee ballot for each election, primary, and referendum in their municipality for which they are eligible to vote. Under the legislation, permanently disabled electors seeking this status must file an application for an absentee ballot together with a doctor's certificate stating that they are permanently disabled and unable to appear in person at their polling place. If this section of the bill is passed it will be effective starting January 1, 2009.

House Resolution No. 21, which just passed both the House and the Senate in May of 2008, proposes a constitutional amendment allowing 17-year-old citizens who will turn 18 on or before the day of a general election to vote in its primary. Under the resolution, such an individual must apply and otherwise qualify for admission as a voter. He or she may then vote in the primary held to determine nominees for the general election. Upon turning 18, the individual's electoral rights attach. Since the Resolution passed both houses, the proposed constitutional amendment is being placed on the 2008 ballot for a vote by the public.

Proposed Senate Joint Resolution No. 5 generally resolves to allow more citizens to vote by absentee ballot but contains no other specific proposals. This resolution has yet to be voted on by either the House or the Senate of the Connecticut General Assembly, though the Resolution has been introduced in the Senate.

### **22) What applicable statutes are possibly affected?**

None of the pending legislation described in Question 21 proposes to amend a particular provision of the Connecticut Election Code. If you would like to read the statutes that generally apply to voter registration and election law, they are under Title 9, Chapters 141, 143 and 145 of Connecticut's General Statutes, specifically:

- § 9-1 through § 9-8a on elections generally;
- § 9-12 through § 9-67 on voter registration, qualifications and admissions; and
- § 9-133f through § 9-163k on absentee voting.

### **23) Are there any helpful elections official contacts?**

Yes, for more information, contact The State Elections Enforcement Commission at:

State Elections Enforcement Commission  
20 Trinity Street  
Hartford, CT 06106  
Suite 101  
Tel. (860) 256-2940  
Toll-free 1-866-SEEC-INFO  
Toll-free (1-866-733-2463)  
Fax (860) 256-2981  
Email SEEC@ct.gov

You can also contact the Legislation and Elections Administration Division (LEAD) at:  
Tel. 860-509-6100  
Email [lead@po.state.ct.us](mailto:lead@po.state.ct.us)

**24) What web resources are available?**

The Connecticut Secretary of State has a website dedicated to providing information on the voter registration process: <http://www.ct.gov/sots/site/default.asp>. This site includes information on absentee ballots, and a list of important dates related to the election.

The National Campaign for Fair Elections is another resource:  
<http://nationalcampaignforfairelections.org/pages/connecticut>