

**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 can be downloaded or submitted electronically at the District of Columbia Board of Elections and Ethics website at <http://www.dcboee.org/>. Application forms also are available at voter registration application distribution agencies, which include the District of Columbia Public Library, the D.C. Fire and Emergency Medical Services Department, the Metropolitan Police Department, and voter registration agencies, which include the Department of Motor Vehicles, the Department of Corrections, the Office of Aging, the Department of Parks and Recreation, and the Department of Human Services. At the Department of Motor Vehicles, an applicant can register to vote on the same form that contains the necessary information required for the issuance, renewal, or correction of a driver's license. 3 DCMR (Title 3, Chapter 5 of D.C. Municipal Regulations) §§ 506, 507, 508.

**2) Are there restrictions on registering to vote using a photocopied voter registration form?**

Photocopies of the District of Columbia Voter Registration Application are accepted, provided that the signature on the application is original. 3 DCMR § 500.3(d). The District of Columbia Voter Registration Application should only be on a form or forms prescribed by the Board of Elections and Ethics.

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

The National Mail Voter Registration Form can be used in the District of Columbia. See [http://www.eac.gov/voter\\_resources/register\\_to\\_vote.aspx](http://www.eac.gov/voter_resources/register_to_vote.aspx). If using the National Voter Registration Form in the District of Columbia, the political party affiliation field must be filled in if you want to take part in that party's primary election, caucus or convention. Additionally, an application must include either the applicant's driver's license number or the last four digits of the applicant's social security number in order to be processed. The race or ethnic group, however, may be left blank.

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

No. However, information relating to a declination to register to vote may not be used for any purpose other than voter registration. D.C. Code (Title 1, Chapter 10 of D.C. Official Code) § 1-1001.07(d)(6).

In addition, the name of the agency at which an individual registered to vote may not be disclosed to the public. 3 DCMR § 507.7.

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

No. However, any inconsistent information on registration forms may delay the registration process.

## **COMPLETING VOTER REGISTRATION FORMS**

**6) How long must you live in the District before you are eligible to register to vote?**

A person must have been a resident of the District of Columbia for a minimum of thirty (30) days preceding the next election. D.C. Code § 1-1001.02(2)(C).

A registered voter who has moved within the District must notify the Board of Elections and Ethics of his or her current address. Prior to the thirtieth (30<sup>th</sup>) day preceding an election, a registered voter may give prior notice of change of address by: (a) completing a change of address on a Voter Registration Application; (b) filing a change of address by signed letter or postal card which includes the voter's name, former and current address, and date of birth; or (c) filing a change of address through the DMV or a voter registration agency. On or after the thirtieth (30<sup>th</sup>) day preceding an election, a registered voter may change his or her address in-person at the office of the Board of Elections and Ethics or on Election Day at the polling place serving the current residence. 3 DCMR § 516. Such a voter must vote by special ballot. D.C. Code § 1-1001.07(i)(4)(A).

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

A person may register to vote using any address he or she considers to be his or her fixed residence address in the District of Columbia. Residence means the principal or primary home or place of abode. In determining what is a principal or primary place of abode, the following circumstances relating to the registrant may be taken into account: (i) Business pursuits; (ii) Employment; (iii) Income sources; (iv) Residence for income or other tax purposes; (v) Residence of parents, spouse, and children; (vi) Leaseholds; (vii) Situs of personal and real property; and (viii) Motor vehicle registration. D.C. Code § 1-1001.02(16)(B). If a college campus or dorm address satisfies the conditions for a fixed residence address in the District of Columbia, then it may be used for registering to vote. However, a D.C. resident in college outside of the District does not automatically give up his or her D.C. resident status while attending school. If that student intends to maintain residence in the District for voting purposes while at college, he or she may not vote in any other state or territory during that time. D.C. Code § 1-1001.02(16)(E). There are no provisions for use of a post office box address to register to vote in the District of Columbia.

**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, is permissible provided that the applicant considers the college address to be his or her fixed residence. D.C. Code § 1-1001.02(16)(B). If, however, a student

intends for his or her D.C. address to remain his or her residence on record for voting purposes, he or she may not register to vote in any other state or territory. D.C. Code § 1-1001.02(16)(E).

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

Identification is not required for voters registering in person to vote in the District of Columbia, but voters who have not provided identification at the time of registration are required to do so at the polling place (**see Question #10**). D.C. Code § 1-1001.07(i)(6). The District of Columbia Voter Registration Form requires the last four digits of the applicant's social security number or the applicant's driver's license number. If an applicant has not been issued a current and valid driver's license number or social security number, that applicant will be assigned a unique identifier for voting purposes. D.C. Code § 1-1001.07(a-1)(2).

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

Each individual who has not previously voted in a federal election in the District of Columbia and who registers to vote by mail shall present, either at the time of registration or at the polling place, or when voting by mail, a copy of a current and valid government photo identification or a copy of a current utility bill, bank statement, government check, or pay check that shows the voter's name and address. D.C. Code § 1-1001.07(i)(6). This requirement does not apply to (a) individuals whose registration application includes a driver's license number or at least the last four digits of the individual's social security number, and matches an existing identification record bearing the same number, name, and date of birth as the application; or (b) individuals entitled to vote without being present at their precinct polling location, such as qualified voters residing overseas and members of the Armed Forces. 3 DCMR § 510; Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Voting Rights Act of 1986.

If the voter does not present one of these forms of identification at the polling place, that person can vote by casting a special ballot. D.C. Code § 1-1001.07(i)(6). A special ballot is a paper ballot counted after the chief registration official has verified that the person is qualified to vote in that precinct. D.C. Code § 1-1001.07(i)(4).

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

The registration form shall include the applicant's: complete name, current residence address, which address is the applicant's fixed residence address in the District, date of birth, original signature, political party affiliation, if any (optional, except if using the National Mail Voter Registration Form), driver's license number in the case of an applicant who has been issued a current and valid driver's license or the last four digits of the applicant's social security number in the case of an applicant who has not (if an applicant has not been issued a current and valid drivers license or a social security number, then the Board of Elections and Ethics shall assign the applicant a unique identifier which shall serve to identify the applicant for voter registration purposes). 3 DCMR § 500.3.

If an applicant for voter registration fails to properly complete the mail voter registration form, the Board of Election and Ethic's registrar shall make reasonable attempts to notify the applicant of the failure and provide the applicant with the opportunity to complete the form in a timely manner to allow for the completion of the registration form prior to the next election. 3 DCMR § 500.9.

Any person who shall register, or attempt to register, or vote or attempt to vote under the provisions of this subchapter and make any false representations as to his or her qualifications for registering or voting can be fined up to \$10,000, imprisoned up to five (5) years, or both. D.C. Code § 1-1001.14.

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

Yes. A registered voter whose name has changed must notify the Board of Election and Ethics of his or her current name. Prior to the thirtieth (30<sup>th</sup>) day preceding an election, a registered voter may give notice of a name change by: (a) completing a change of name on a Voter Registration Application; (b) filing a change of name by signed letter or postal card which includes the voter's former and current name, address, and date of birth; or (c) filing a change of name through the DMV or a voter registration agency. On or after the thirtieth day preceding an election, a registered voter may change his or her name in-person at the office of the Board of Elections and Ethics. The effective date of any change of name, for voter registration purposes, shall be the date that the notice of change is received by the Board. 3 DCMR § 515.

## **REGISTERING OTHERS TO VOTE**

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

A voter registration agency must deliver or mail registration applications to the Board of Elections and Ethics not later than ten (10) days after its acceptance, except that if a voter registration is accepted at a voter registration office within five (5) days before the deadline for voter registration in any election, the application shall be transmitted by the agency to the Board not later than five (5) days after the date of acceptance. 3 DCMR § 507.

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

No. There are no express provisions in the D.C. Electoral Code prohibiting the submission of voter registration forms by individuals receiving compensation.

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

No. There is no express training requirement under the D.C. Electoral Code.

**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?**

Voter registration applications submitted by mail or in-person at a voter registration agency must be submitted prior to the 30<sup>th</sup> day before the next election. If the 30<sup>th</sup> day preceding an election falls on a Saturday, Sunday, or holiday, then the deadline shall be extended to the next business day. For the 2010

general election, the deadline to register by mail or in-person at a voter registration agency is October 4, 2010. If a voter registration is accepted at a voter registration office within five (5) days before the deadline for voter registration in any election, the application shall be transmitted by the third party to the Board of Elections and Ethics not later than five (5) days after the date of acceptance. 3 DCMR §§ 509, 511.

There is no deadline for submitting a voter registration application in-person at the office of the Board of Elections and Ethics. 3 DCMR § 510. In addition, voters may register on Election Day by appearing in person at the polling place in which the individual maintains residence. 3 DCMR § 513. However, an individual who registers to vote after the date that in-person absentee voting begins (at least seven days prior to Election Day) must vote by special ballot if (a) the election is before December 31, 2010, or (b) the election is after December 31, 2010 and the individual did not present a valid, government-issued photo identification card showing the individual's address when he or she registered. 3 DCMR §§ 703, 713, 714.

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

Yes, a voter registration agency must deliver or mail registration applications to the Board of Elections and Ethics not later than ten (10) days after its acceptance, except that if a voter registration is accepted at a voter registration office within five (5) days before the deadline for voter registration-by mail in any election, the application shall be transmitted by the agency to the Board not later than five (5) days after the date of acceptance. 3 DCMR § 507.1(e).

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

Yes. An individual may register to vote on Election Day by appearing in person at the polling place for the precinct in which the individual maintains residence. The individual must complete a voter registration application, swear or affirm that he or she meets the requirements of a qualified elector, and provide proof of residence in the form of either a copy of current and valid government 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. 3 DCMR § 513.

A voter who registers on Election Day for an election before December 31, 2010, or a voter who registers on Election Day for an election after December 31, 2010 and does not present a valid, government-issued photo identification card showing his or her address at the polling place, must vote by special ballot. 3 DCMR § 714.

A voter who has moved within the District and has not notified the Board of Elections and Ethics of his or her current address may change his or her address on Election Day in-person at the Board's office or at the polling place for his or her current address (**see Question #6**). Such a voter must vote by special ballot. D.C. Code § 1-1001.07(i)(4)(A); 3 DCMR § 516.3.

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

D.C. election law allows for both early and absentee voting.

For each primary and general election, qualified electors may choose to cast a full ballot for their precinct at early voting centers. The early voting centers shall be open for no fewer than seven (7) days

prior to Election Day, from the hours of 8:30 a.m. to 7 p.m., Monday through Saturday. To locate early voting centers, visit <http://www.dcboee.org>. 3 DCMR § 703.

An individual who has properly registered to vote in the District of Columbia may make a written request for an absentee ballot electronically, by mail, or in person at the Board of Elections and Ethics. This request must include the voter's name, election(s) for which the absentee ballot is requested, address from which the voter is registered to vote, voter's current address, address to which ballot shall be delivered, voter's driver's license number or last four digits of voter's social security number, voter's date of birth, and voter's original signature. The voter does not need to provide a reason for requesting an absentee ballot. A mailed or electronically received request must be received from the voter at least seven (7) days before the election. In certain circumstances including illness and accident, a voter may request an emergency absentee ballot by mail or electronically from the sixth (6th) day prior to Election Day to the time the polls close on Election Day. 3 DCMR § 719. An individual may request an absentee ballot in-person at the Board of Elections and Ethics from the fifteenth (15th) day before the election until 4:45 p.m. the day before the election. 3 DCMR § 717.

## **VOTER REGISTRATION LEGISLATION**

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

We are unaware of any pending legislation that affects voter registration.

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

None of the statutes or regulations currently in force are subject to pending legislation. If you would like to read statutes that generally apply to voter registration, they can be found under Chapter 10 (Elections) of Title 1 (Government Organization) of the D.C. Official Code. Additional information may be found in Chapter 5 (Voter Registration) under Title 3 (Elections and Ethics) of the District of Columbia Municipal Regulations.

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

For more information, contact the District of Columbia Board of Elections and Ethics at:

Board of Elections and Ethics  
Government of the District of Columbia  
One Judiciary Square  
441 4th Street NW  
Suite 250 North  
Washington, DC 20001  
202-727-2525  
1-866-328-6837  
director@dcboee.org

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

The District of Columbia Board of Elections and Ethics website is dedicated to providing information on the voter registration process: <http://www.dcboee.org>. This site includes resources such as frequently

asked questions, and allows individuals to register to vote, check and update their registration status, request an absentee ballot, check special ballot status, and find their polling place online.