

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

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

Maine law requires that the following agencies and entities offer voter registration application forms in all their offices: the Department of the Secretary of State; the Department of Health and Human Services; the Bureau of Motor Vehicles; the Bureau of Corporations, Elections and Commissions; the Bureau of Family Independence; the Bureau of Health; the Bureau of Rehabilitation; all municipal registrars and clerks; Armed Forces recruitment offices; and public high schools.

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

Maine law does not specify whether copies of Maine voter registration forms may be used to register to vote. However, the U.S. Election Assistance Commission provides that all states that accept the National Voter Registration Form (of which Maine is one, **see Question #3**) will also accept copies of the National Form, provided that the signature on the application is the original.

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

The National Voter Registration Form can be used in Maine. Voter registration drives using the National Voter Registration Form are subject to the same requirements described in **Questions #13-16**. If using the National Voter Registration Form in Maine, the political party affiliation and race/ethnicity fields may be left blank. However, voters who do not enroll in a particular political party may not be allowed to vote in that party's primary or caucus.

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

Yes. In general, physical voter registration applications are public records and the general public is permitted to inspect and copy physical records upon request. However, a voter's signature and identification number provided on the voter registration application are nonpublic records when they are maintained in an electronic format, such as in the central voter registration system ("CVR").

Additionally, the Central Voter Registration System ("CVR") is a centralized electronic information system required by federal law that stores voter registration information provided by Maine voters and makes it accessible to the Secretary of State and all municipal jurisdictions. In order to access voter registration information maintained in the CVR, a person may purchase a list or report of voter information. The purchaser must pay a fee, and is specifically prohibited from using information obtained from the CVR for any solicitations unrelated to "get out the vote" efforts, activities of a political party, or activities related to a political campaign. Those who buy this restricted information are also prohibited from providing it to others who intend to use it for solicitations unrelated to "get

out the vote” efforts or political activities. Voter registration information from the CVR may be provided to law enforcement agencies acting with a bona fide law enforcement purpose upon written request.

Registration information for voters who register to vote pursuant to the special registration procedure for participants in the Address Confidentiality Program (created to protect victims of domestic violence, stalking, and sexual assault) will not be disclosed with the registration information of other voters.

Further, a voter who has good reason to believe that the physical safety of the voter or a member of the voter's immediate family residing with the voter would be jeopardized if the voter's residence address were made public, and who submits a signed statement to the registrar stating as much, is still required to provide a residence address in his or her voter registration application, but the registrar must keep the person's residence address confidential and must not allow it to be made public. The voter's mailing address may also be confidential if it discloses the voter's residence address, but the voter's other registration information does not receive any additional special protection.

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

No. However, applicants should be aware that if the form includes incorrect responses or fails to respond to required questions, the municipal registrar may reject the voter registration application. **See Question #11.**

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 length of time that a person must live in a county in order to be eligible to vote in that county, provided that the person establishes and maintains his or her legal residence there. A person loses the person's voting residence in Maine, however, if the person registers to vote in another state or votes in another state's election, either in person or by absentee ballot. **See Question #7.**

7) Are there any restrictions on registering to vote using a nontraditional address or a post office box?

A person may register to vote using any address he or she considers to be his or her residence, even if the address is a nontraditional residence such as a shelter, park or underpass. A residence is that place where the person has established a fixed and principal home to which the person, whenever temporarily absent, intends to return.

A post office box does not satisfy the requirements of residence, but a post office box may be used as a mailing address if a separate residence address is given.

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

Yes. A student may register to vote in the municipality where the student attends school so long as the student has established and maintains his or her residence in that municipality. Any person may register to vote in the state even if they leave temporarily so long as they establish residency in the state. Residence is that place where the person has established a fixed and principal home to which the person, whenever temporarily absent, intends to return. **See Question #7.** Any registered voter may cast an absentee ballot.

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

Identification is not required to register if the appropriate registrar receives the application prior to 20 days before the election. All mail-in registrants, however, must submit a copy of their Maine driver's license or other valid photo ID, a current utility bill, or bank statement, or paycheck, or other government document that shows the voter's name and address. If the registrar has doubts as to the qualifications of a person to vote, the registrar must schedule a hearing where the voter can present evidence or witness testimony showing that he or she is qualified to register.

Any person who registers during the 20 days before Election Day or on Election Day must register in person and show proof of identity and residence. If satisfactory proof of identity and residence cannot be provided to the registrar or deputy, the person's name will be entered into the CVR and placed on the incoming voting list and the person will be allowed to cast a challenged ballot.

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

No. As long as a person is already registered to vote, that person does not need to provide identification in order to receive a ballot.

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

Maine's voter registration form requires applicants to provide the following information: full name; date of birth; street or location address; mailing address (if different than the street or location address); previous registration address; change of name (if applicable); voter ID number (either a valid Maine driver's license number or the last four digits of a Social Security number, unless the applicant has neither); and the applicant's signature. If any required information is missing from the registration form, the registrar must notify the applicant that the form is incomplete. If the missing information is not provided by the applicant, the registrar must reject the application. The registrar cannot reject an application because optional information is missing.

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

Yes. Although a person whose name has changed since registering is required to notify the registrar prior to Election Day, a person who fails to notify the registrar of the change may still be able to vote. If the registrar has not made the change based upon his or her own routine review of state records, the voter may appear before the registrar on Election Day and request that the registrar make the change on the incoming voting list and CVR. The registrar must then issue a certificate to the voter containing the correct information, which the voter must present to the warden of the appropriate voting place.

REGISTERING OTHERS TO VOTE

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

Applications for voter registration taken by third parties must be transferred to the Secretary of State within five days of receipt. The Secretary of State is then responsible for transferring the application to the appropriate registrar's office within five or seven business days. After the voter's information has been entered into the CVR, the registrar shall, as expeditiously as possible, send a written acknowledgment notice to the applicant that states whether the application for registration is accepted or rejected. If a mailed notice of acceptance is returned to the registrar as undeliverable within 15 days after it is sent, the registrar must reject the application and provide a new acknowledgment notice to the applicant indicating the rejection. If a mailed notice of acceptance is not returned as undeliverable within 15 days after it is sent, the voter is automatically designated as active in the CVR system.

Third parties taking voter registration applications within 30 days of the election must notify applicants that their applications may not be received by the registrar before the election, but that the applicants can register in person on or before Election Day.

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

No. There are no express provisions of Maine election law 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 Maine election law.

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

No. There is no express residence requirement for volunteers or staff of voter registration drives under Maine election law.

REGISTRATION DEADLINES

17) What is the deadline to register to vote?

There is no deadline to register in person. Applicants may register in person at any time before the election and on Election Day before the polls close. However, voter registration forms submitted by mail or by third parties must be received by the municipal registrar's office no later than the close of business on the 21st day before Election Day. An applicant who wishes to register to vote during the 20 days before the election (the "closed period") or on Election Day must do so in person with proof of identity and residence. **See also Question #9.** The 20-day closed period before the November 4, 2008 General Election begins on Wednesday, October 15. Voter registration applications not received by the close of business on Tuesday, October 14, 2008 must be submitted in person.

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

Yes. Applications for voter registration taken by third parties must be transferred to the Secretary of State within five days of receipt.

19) Is Election Day registration allowed?

Yes. Applicants who appear in person and present sufficient proof of identity and residence on Election Day will be allowed to vote. **See Questions #9 and #17.**

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

Absentee ballots may be cast at any election by any voter who requests an absentee ballot. The voter need not specify a reason to receive an absentee ballot. Absentee ballots must be received by the municipal clerk before the polls close on Election Day. Although polling places do not open before Election Day, a voter may vote an absentee ballot in the presence of the municipal clerk before Election Day as soon as absentee ballots are available and without completing an absentee ballot application. Absentee ballots are typically available 30-45 days before an election. A list of all the municipal clerks and their addresses is available at <http://www.maine.gov/sos/cec/elec/clerk.htm>.

Absentee ballots may be requested beginning three months before Election Day. Applications for absentee ballots submitted earlier than three months before Election Day may not be processed. An application for an absentee ballot for any election for federal office submitted by a uniformed service

voter or an overseas voter, however, will not be denied on the grounds that the request was made earlier than three months before Election Day. Applications for absentee ballots can be obtained at each municipal clerk's office or online at http://www.maine.gov/portal/government/edemocracy/voter_absenteeform.html.

VOTER REGISTRATION LEGISLATION

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

We are unaware of any pending legislation. However, there have been some recent developments in voter registration legislation in Maine. On March 25, 2008, the Maine Legislature approved an act to amend the election laws. Among other things, the amendments specified that an person will not be issued an absentee ballot by telephone or by e-mail, unless the municipal clerk decides at least 120 days before the election to accept absentee ballot applications by e-mail. Otherwise, a properly completed voter registration application is required. **See Question #18.** The amendments also require the clerk to update the CVR system within 5 business days after each election to reflect any absentee ballots received after the polls have closed on Election Day. Me. Legis. 515 (2008).

22) What applicable statutes are possibly affected?

If you would like to read the statutes that generally apply to voter registration, they are under Title 21-A of Maine's Revised Statutes Annotated, specifically:

- § 1 to § 1207 on elections generally;
- § 101 to § 222 on voter registration; and
- § 751 to § 791 on absentee voting.

23) Are there any helpful elections official contacts?

For more information, contact the Maine Secretary of State, Division of Elections at:

Office of the Secretary of State
Division of Elections
101 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333-0101
(207) 624-7650
CEC.Elections@maine.gov
www.maine.gov/sos/cec/elec/

24) What web resources are available?

The Maine Secretary of State has a website dedicated to providing information on the voter registration process: http://www.maine.gov/sos/cec/elec/voter_info/index.html. This site includes resources such as frequently asked questions, a guide to absentee voting, and contact information for local municipal clerks and registrars.

The National Campaign for Fair Elections is another resource:

<http://www.nationalcampaignforfairelections.org/pages/maine>.