

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

VOTING WITH A CRIMINAL RECORD

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VOTER ELIGIBILITY

Who is eligible to vote?

To be eligible to vote, you must:

- Be a United States Citizen;
- Be 18 years old on the date of the General Election; and
- Have lived in Illinois for at least 30 days (jump to [Can I vote if I am in a temporary living situation, do not have a permanent address, or am experiencing homelessness?](#))

If you meet ALL the above criteria and you have a criminal record, **you can vote** unless you are currently serving a sentence in any federal or state prison, county jail, or on work release or furlough.

Who is NOT eligible to vote?

- Non-U.S. Citizens (including “green card” holders and other people with lawful status)
- Minors (under 18) on the date of the General Election (jump to [If I will be 18 by election day can I vote in primary elections?](#))
- Anyone convicted of any crime and *currently in prison or jail for that crime*
- Anyone on furlough (temporary leave from prison or jail)
- Anyone released from prison or jail through a work release program
- Residents of an [Adult Transition Center](#) (“ATC”)
- Anyone who voted in a different state *in the same election*

Can I vote if I have been released from jail on parole, mandatory supervised release, or electronic monitoring? Yes. Anybody who is no longer incarcerated can vote, regardless of their criminal record.

Can I vote if I am on probation? Yes. You can vote if you have been convicted but are on probation.

Can I vote if I have been incarcerated before? Yes. You cannot vote while you are incarcerated, but you can vote as soon as you are released and registered.

Can I vote if I have been charged and not convicted? Yes. You can vote if:

- You have been released on bail or bond
- You are in jail but not convicted of the crime for which you are being held
- You are under electronic monitoring
- You have been recently arrested but not convicted

If you are detained (being held in the custody of the law enforcement), but eligible to vote, **your county jail must provide you an opportunity to [register to vote](#) and to [vote by mail](#)** (subject to application distribution deadlines). *If you are refused these applications, call the Election Protection Hotline at 1-866-OUR-VOTE (1-866-687-8683)* (jump to [How do I register to vote if I am in jail?](#)).

Can I vote if I am in a temporary living situation, do not have a permanent address, or am experiencing homelessness? Yes. People living in a temporary living situation -- like living with a friend, relative, or at a shelter -- are eligible to vote. You can also vote if you are experiencing homelessness (jump to [What address should I use?](#))

If I will be 18 by Election Day can I vote in primary elections? Yes. If you are 17 years old, but will be 18 years old on or by the date of the General Election (generally in November), you are eligible to vote in the associated Primary Election (generally in March of the same year) (jump to [How do I register to vote?](#) & [When are elections?](#))

REGISTERING TO VOTE

Do I have to re-register if I was registered before I was incarcerated? Yes. You must re-register to vote even if you were registered to vote before conviction.

When can I register to vote? You can register to vote almost any day of the year. If you register:

- **Up to 28 days or more before Election Day.** You can register online, [by mail](#), or [in-person](#) at your local election authority. If it is less than 28 days, you will no longer be able to register by mail.
- **Up to 16 days before Election Day.** You can register in person or [online](#). You can also register and vote at the same time. [Find a location to register and to vote in-person at the same time here.](#) If it is Election Day, you can register at your designated polling location when you cast your vote (jump to [How do I cast my vote?](#))

How do I register to vote? You have three options: register [online](#), [by mail](#), or [in-person](#). **You must re-register to vote even if you were registered to vote before conviction.**

- **How do I register to vote online?** Register to vote online [here](#).
 - **Identification** - To register online you **must** have an Illinois Driver's License or State ID number AND the last four digits of your social security number. If you don't have these forms of ID, you must register by mail or in-person.
 - **Deadline** - The deadline to register online is 28 days before Election Day. If it is less than 28 days before Election Day, you must register and vote at the same time, either by mail or in person (jump to [When are elections?](#))
- **How do I register to vote by mail?** You can find a voter registration application [online here](#). You can also pick up applications at many public and private facilities such as public libraries, schools, and county clerk's offices. Submit your completed application to **2329 S. MacArthur Blvd., Springfield, Illinois 62704**.
 - **Identification** - Jump to [What I.D. do I need to register?](#)
 - **Deadline** - The deadline to register by mail is 28 days before Election Day. It must be postmarked prior to the close of registration (jump to [How do I vote by mail?](#))
- **How do I register to vote in person?** You can register to vote in person at your local election authority's office or your local Department of Motor Vehicle (DMV) office **until 28 days before Election Day**. [Find your local office here](#). If it is less than 28 days before Election Day you must register to vote and cast your vote *at the same time* (jump to [How do I early vote?](#) & [How do I vote on Election Day?](#))
 - **Identification** - You will need two forms of accepted I.D., with at least one I.D. showing your current address when you register (jump to [What address should I use?](#)). **See the full list of possible I.D.s at [What I.D. do I need to register?](#)**

What I.D. do I need to register?

Online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Illinois Driver's License or State ID number (with registration address listed) <li style="text-align: center;">AND - Last 4 digits of social security number
Mail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Illinois Driver's License number or State ID number (with registration address listed) <li style="text-align: center;">OR - Last four digits of social security number <li style="text-align: center;">OR - Copy of a current photo ID (<i>that states your name and address</i>) <li style="text-align: center;">OR - Copy of a document showing your name and current address (utility bill, bank statement, paycheck, etc.) <p><i>If you do not have an Illinois Driver's License or State ID, and did not include the last four digits of your social security number in your mail-in application, bring the document you used to register (with your name and address listed) with you when you go to vote.</i></p>
In-person	<p>Requires two forms of I.D. with at least one I.D. showing your current address (jump to What address should I use?). You can provide any two of the below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Government-issued documents (e.g., your IDOC identification card) - Illinois Driver's license or State ID - U.S. passport or Military ID - Vehicle registration card - Lease, mortgage, deed, or rental agreement - Credit or debit card - Social Security, Medicaid, or Medicare card - LINK/Public Aid/Department of Human Services card - Illinois FOID card - Civic, union, or professional association membership card - Postmarked mail delivered to the voter's current residence, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Utility bills - electric, internet, insurance, etc; - School transcript, bill, or report card from school; - Bank statement, pay stub or pension statement; - Official mail from any government agency

If you do not have an acceptable form of I.D., you cannot register to vote.

Do I need to bring my registration card with me to vote?

No. You do not have to show your voter registration card to vote, but **bringing it might help** if there are any problems finding your registration information.

How do I register to vote if I am in jail? If you are in jail, but are not serving a sentence for a conviction, you can submit your completed [Illinois Voter Registration Application](#) to jail staff or submit your application by mail, unless the deadline for submission has passed.

What address should I use?

If you...

Already registered to vote in jail (you were detained, but not convicted)		Are registering for the first time since being detained or incarcerated		
And are renewing your registration within 30 days of your release:	And are renewing your registration more than 30 days since being released:	And are living (or plan to live) at the same address where you resided before going to prison or jail:	And will not be living at the same address as you did before incarceration , but do not yet have a permanent address, and it is within 30 days of your release:	And will not be living at the same address as you did before incarceration , but do not yet have a new permanent address, and it is more than 30 days since your release:
You may use the address of the prison or jail	You must use a new address	You may use this original address, where you lived before incarceration	You may use the address where you lived before incarceration	You must use a new address

You may still register to vote as someone experiencing homelessness - even if you are living on the street, in a shelter, at a food pantry, or with a friend or relative. You will need:

- Two forms of I.D., including one I.D. that shows proof of your residence *or mailing address*
- A letter from an employer, a social worker, the director of a food pantry or homeless shelter, or a friend or relative with whom you are temporarily living *that states you receive your mail at that address*

For help registering to vote and voting while you are in a temporary living situation, contact [Chicago Coalition for the Homeless](#) at (312) 641-4149 or 1(800) 940-1119 or the [Illinois State Board of Elections](#).

How do I know if I successfully registered? After you register, you will get your voter registration card in the mail within three weeks. Check that your name and address are correct, and fix any mistakes by calling (312) 814-6440 or (217) 782-4141. [You can also check here](#). If you receive no ballot in the mail within 3 weeks, call the numbers listed in [Further Assistance](#).

Are there any fees to register to vote or to vote? No. Registering to vote and voting is FREE.

VOTING

When are elections? Generally, **primary elections** occur in March and **general elections** occur in November in years ending with an even number (e.g., 2018, 2020, 2022, 2024...). There may also be runoff elections for select races following general elections. Mayoral and local elections in Illinois are held in years ending with an odd number (e.g., 2019, 2021, 2023, 2025...). [Check the date of the next election here.](#)

When can I vote? You can vote by mail (starting 90 days before the election) or in person at an early-voting location (starting 40 days before the election) up until the polls close on Election Day. You can vote in person only at your polling location on Election Day from 6:00am to 7:00pm.

How do I cast my vote? There are three methods to vote:

- Vote-by-Mail** - This method is good if you have restricted movement and it would be difficult to get to a polling place, or if you have limited time.
- Early Voting in Person** - This method is good to avoid lines, if you don't have a flexible schedule (evening and weekend voting hours are available), or if you are a first time voter. Staff should have more time to address any issues that come up and help answer questions.
- Election Day Voting in Person** - This method is good if you want to vote in your home precinct. If you missed regular registration deadlines you can register at your polling location on Election Day.

How do I vote by mail?

1. **Make sure you are registered to vote.** [You can check here.](#) If you are not registered yet, turn in your Illinois Voter Registration Application *at the same time* you apply for a vote-by-mail ballot (jump to [How do I register to vote by mail?](#))
2. **Apply for a vote-by-mail ballot.** You apply for a vote-by-mail ballot by submitting a paper or online application to your local election authority as early as 90 days before Election Day and up to 5 days before Election Day. [Find the application here.](#) Follow the instructions carefully, complete all questions, and *sign your application.*
3. **Your application is accepted or rejected.** If you haven't heard about the status of your authority **within a week** of applying for your ballot, [contact your election authority.](#)
 - a. **Accepted.** If your application is accepted, you will be sent a vote-by-mail ballot to the address you used to.
 - b. **Rejected.** If your application is rejected your local election authority may contact you by phone, email, or letter to inform you they have rejected your application. You may try to fix the error directly, or you may submit a new application that fixes the error.
4. **Vote and submit your ballot.** Make your selections and submit your completed vote-by-mail ballot by hand or mail anytime between 40 days before Election Day and Election Day. You can submit your ballot by mail or by hand.
 - a. **By mail.** Place your completed ballot in the provided return envelope addressed to your local election authority and deposit it in a U.S. mailbox. Your ballot must be **postmarked by midnight on Election Day.** The U.S. Post Office will deliver your ballot with or without stamp.

- b. **By hand.** If you decide you no longer want or need to submit your ballot by mail, you can deliver your ballot by hand. Your completed ballot must be **submitted to your local election authority before 7:00pm on Election Day.**

How do I early vote? You can start casting your ballot as early as 40 days before Election Day until the day before Election Day. You can cast your ballot at any of the locations set up by your local election authority. [Check here to find out where you can early vote](#) or [contact your local election authority.](#)

How do I vote on Election Day? Cast your vote in person on Election Day by going to your designated polling place **between 6:00am and 7:00pm.** As long as you are in line by 7:00pm you have the right to vote. On Election Day you must vote at your assigned polling place. [Find your polling place here](#) (this is based on the [address](#) you used to register).

What do I need to bring to vote in person?

- **If you are already registered.** You do not need to bring an I.D. if you are already registered to vote and you are voting at your assigned polling place. But it might be helpful to bring an I.D. because it is the easiest way to clear up questions, if there are any, about your eligibility to vote.
- **If you have incompletely registered.** If you submitted a mail-in registration form that did not include an Illinois I.D., Driver's License number, or a Social Security number, you need to provide one form of I.D. that shows your current address in order to complete your registration.
- **If you are not registered.** If you need to register on Election Day you must bring two forms of I.D. At least one of these forms of I.D. must show your current address (jump to [What types of I.D. can you use?](#) & [What address should I use?](#))
- **If you need to change your address.** If you are already registered but need to file a change of address, you must bring two forms of I.D. At least one of these forms of I.D. must show your current address.

If you are asked for your I.D. in situations not covered above, call the Election Protection hotline at 1-866--OUR-VOTE (1-866-687-8683)

Where do I vote? If you are voting on Election Day you must vote at your specific **polling location.** Your polling location is an assigned location (usually in a neighborhood building such as school, library, church, etc.) where you must vote at based on the address where you registered. You can find your polling location by:

- Checking your voter registration card
- [Contacting your local election authority](#)
- [Checking online](#)

If you are participating in early voting you can vote at a variety of locations. [Check here to see where you can early vote.](#)

What if my polling location is in a restricted location where I am not allowed to go?

If you are required to register on a sex offender registry and your polling place is at a location that you are not allowed to go (for example, a school), you have several voting options:

- Vote at your local election authority 27 days or less before Election Day or on Election Day
- Vote at an early voting polling place where you are not restricted
- Apply to vote by mail

You are not required to tell any election officials or staff of your status.

What will be on my ballot? You can view a sample ballot before you vote [at your local election authority's website or office](#); it may also be published in your local newspaper. There are also online resources like [Ballotpedia](#) and [Vote411](#). The sample ballot will include all the positions, candidates, and questions about issues that will appear on your ballot.

What can I bring into the voting booth? You can bring:

- Your phone
- Notes, mailers, voting guides, or a sample ballot
- Your children, under 18 years old (*let the election official at your polling place know you will be joined by your children*)
- **If you are a voter with a disability or need language support you can have someone you trust help you with voting.**

What if I need help casting my vote? You can have a person help you to register and to vote if you can't see or have problems with your vision, have limited mobility, or have any physical disability. You can also have assistance if you are unable to speak, read, or write in English. **Kane and Lake County provide all election materials in English and Spanish, and Cook County provides all election materials in English, Spanish, Chinese, and Hindi.**

You can get help from any person you want, including a friend or family member, as long as they are NOT an employer, a representative of your employer, or an officer or agent of your union. You can also get help from an election judge or an employee of your local election authority. If you get help from an election judge, two election judges from different political parties should come into your privacy booth to help you.

No matter who helps you, no one should tell you how to cast your vote.

Who can I ask for help if I still have questions?

- Election Protection Hotline at 1-866-OUR-VOTE (1-866-687-8683)
- Illinois State Board of Elections at (217) 782-4141 or (312) 814-6440
- Chicago Board of Election Commissioners at (312) 269-7900 (Chicago residents)

What if the election judge doesn't let me vote? If an election judge insists you cannot vote or is insisting you complete a provisional ballot, find out as much as you can about *why*. You may be able to resolve the issue and cast your vote.

If you are not given a regular (non-provisional) ballot, call Election Protection 1-866-OUR-VOTE for advice on how to resolve any issues.

What are provisional ballots? A provisional ballot is used to record a vote when there are questions about a voter's eligibility. A provisional ballot should be used as a last resort. If you vote on a provisional ballot, look for the reason checked on your provisional voter affidavit for why you were refused a regular ballot. The provisional ballot looks identical to a regular ballot, but PROVISIONAL is written on the top.

You have 7 days to submit qualifying proof to your election authority to challenge the reason you were refused a regular ballot.

*If you cast a provisional ballot call the **Election Protection** hotline (1-866-OUR- VOTE or 1-866-687-8683) for advice and guidance on what steps need to be taken in order for you vote to count.*

FURTHER ASSISTANCE

If you have any further questions related to registration or voting, please contact the following. These resources are free and available to all Illinois voters.

Election Protection

Election protection hotlines are national voter protection hotlines for all voters, regardless of your political beliefs. Call the hotline if you have any questions about registration or voting.

- 1-866-OUR-VOTE or 1-866-687-8683 [ENGLISH]
- 1-888-Ve-Y-Vota or 1-888-83-9-8682 [ENGLISH & SPANISH]
- 1-888-API-VOTE or 1-888- 274-8683 [MANDARIN, CANTONESE, VIETNAMESE, KOREAN, and BENGALI]

You can find additional information at 866ourvote.org

State and Local Election Authority

The Illinois Board of Elections and your local election authority can answer questions about registration and voting, and many of them have helpful information about voting on their websites. [Look up your local election authority here.](#)

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