

guide to
**REGISTERING AND
VOTING IN ILLINOIS**

ACLU Illinois

our vote is **OUR POWER**

One of the most important parts of our democracy is the ability to vote in free and fair elections. When we vote we get to choose the elected officials at the federal, state, and local levels that will set and uphold the policies for the communities we live in.

We put together this non-partisan voting guide for elections in Illinois. In it you'll find information about elections, as well resources to help you register and vote, and make sure that you know your rights when you head to the polls.

Find more information about upcoming elections, including important dates at: [**www.aclu-il.org/voting**](http://www.aclu-il.org/voting)

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VOTER *eligibility*



TO REGISTER TO VOTE IN ILLINOIS, YOU MUST:

- Be a United States Citizen.
- Be a resident of the jurisdiction at least 30 days prior to the election.
- Be 18 before the next general election (17 year olds can register and vote in the primary if they will be 18 before the day of the general election).

That's it! You can vote in Illinois regardless of previous criminal history, or even if you're lacking certain identification like a driver's license.

Even if you are registered to vote, you cannot vote if you are currently serving a sentence in any federal or state prison, county jail, or are on work release.

WHEN YOU NEED TO REGISTER TO VOTE:

- You've never voted in Illinois before
- You have a new address since you last voted in Illinois
- You have legally changed your name since you last voted
- You must re-register to vote when you are released from serving your sentence even if you were registered to vote before conviction

If you have not voted in recent elections, check your registration on the Illinois Board of Election website, or with the local Election Authority in your county, or the Chicago Board of Elections.

register **TO VOTE**

If you have a state issued ID (Illinois State ID or Illinois Driver's License):

REGISTER ONLINE

Online registration is available on the Illinois State Board of Elections website until 16 days before the Election.

OR

REGISTER BY MAIL

Download the form in English or Spanish from the Illinois Board of Elections website and send your mail-in registration to your local county's election authority, or the Chicago Board of Elections. The mail-in registration must be received 27 days before the Election.

If you have a state-issued ID or other acceptable forms of ID:

(Find a list of items you can use to register in person on the following page.)

IN PERSON REGISTRATION

Available throughout the election cycle, and available in at least one location in every county the day of the Election. The locations available to register can change depending on the proximity to the election when you register to vote. Find out more from the local election authority for your county, or the Chicago Board of Elections.

You can register to vote in Illinois on Election Day!

ACCEPTABLE FORM OF ID TO REGISTER TO VOTE

To register to vote in person you need two forms of ID from the list below. **At least one of these two IDs must list the voter's current address.**

- Passport or Military ID
- Driver's License or State ID card
- College/University/School/Work ID
- Vehicle registration card
- Lease, mortgage or deed to home
- Credit or debit card
- Social Security, Medicare or Medicaid card
- Insurance card
- Civic, union or professional membership card
- LINK/Public Aid/Department of Human Services card
- Illinois FOID card

Examples of first-class mail addressed to voter that can be used as ID:

- Bill, Transcript or Report Card from School
- Bank Statement, Pay Stub or Pension Statement
- Utility, Medical or Insurance Bill
- Official mail from any government agency

If you are currently houseless you can still register to vote. Find more informaton on page 10.

ways to **VOTE**

VOTE IN PERSON

EARLY VOTING AT THE POLLS:

You do not need to wait until Election Day to vote in person in Illinois. Early voting is typically available 40 days before an election until the day before.

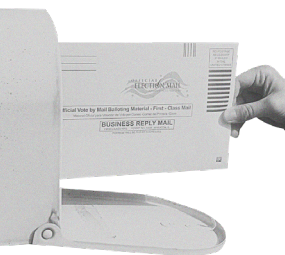
Early voting locations and times will vary per county. Look at the election authority website for your county, or check with the Chicago Board of Elections, for more information on where to vote early.

VOTING ON ELECTION DAY:

On Election Day polls will be open from 6AM to 7PM. Remember that if you are still in line when the polls close, stay in line. You have a right to vote.



You do not typically need to show a photo ID to vote in Illinois. See the Know Your Rights section on page 7 to find a list of limited scenarios in which you may be required to show an ID.



VOTE BY MAIL

Any Illinois registered voter can request a mail-in ballot to vote during an election. The application to vote by mail can be found through the local election authority of your county, or the Chicago Board of Elections.

TRACKING YOUR BALLOT:

Illinois does not have a universal system for ballot tracking. Check on your local election authority's website to see if they do. Contact your election authority to inquire if you have not received your ballot.

RETURNING YOUR BALLOT:

- Remember to sign the outside of the envelope.
- You can return it at a designated drop box in your county.
- If you mail your ballot it must be postmarked by Election Day (not just in the mailbox), and received no later than two weeks after Election Day.
- You do not need to have postage for your ballot to be accepted.

VOTING IN PERSON IF YOU REQUESTED A MAIL-IN BALLOT:

- **If you have already received your mail ballot**, take it with you to the polls and surrender it to an election judge. Your mail ballot should be voided, and you should receive a regular ballot.
- **If you have not yet received your mail ballot**, you should be asked to sign an affidavit certifying you have not received your ballot. You should then be issued a regular ballot.
- **If you received your mail ballot but lost it**, you may sign an affidavit certifying you have not yet voted in this election. You should then be issued a provisional ballot (page 8).
- **If your mail ballot arrives after you have voted but on or before Election Day, you must discard the mail ballot.** Do not attempt to vote your mail ballot after you have voted in person. Doing so is a Class 3 felony. (And because voting systems will not allow more than one vote per voter, your mail ballot will be rejected.)

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS *when voting*

- **You do not need to present a photo ID to vote in Illinois.** A poll worker should not ask you for ID except in a narrow range of circumstances. You may need an ID if:
 - An Election Judge challenges your right to vote
 - You registered to vote by mail and did not provide ID
 - If you are also registering to vote or changing your registration address on the day that you vote
- On Election Day, you can cast your ballot after the polls close **if you are in line at the time listed as closing**
- You may **bring written or printed materials** into the voting booth to assist you
- You can request **up to two hours off of work** to go and vote in Illinois, if your work schedule prevents you from getting to the polls while they are open
- **If you are denied the right to vote** because you are challenged by a judge, your name does not appear on the rolls, or you do not have ID (in the few circumstances where ID is required) **you are entitled to a provisional ballot.** Be sure the poll worker gives you instructions about any steps you need to take in order to ensure that your ballot

IF YOU ENCOUNTER ANY PROBLEMS WHILE VOTING CALL THE ELECTION PROTECTION VOTER HOTLINE

English: 866-OUR-VOTE (1-866-687-8683)

Spanish: 888-VE-Y-VOTA (1-888-839-8682)

Asian languages: 888-API-VOTE (1-888-274-8683)

Arabic: 844-YALLA-US (1-844-925-5287)

American Sign Language video call number: 301-818-VOTE
(301-818-8683)

or contact the ACLU of Illinois at acluofillinois@aclu-il.org

PROVISIONAL BALLOTS

Provisional ballots are given when the election judge does not have enough information to confirm that a voter's ballot is eligible to be counted.

Contact your county election authority or the Chicago Board of Elections within seven days to make sure your ballot is counted.

Reasons for voting a Provisional Ballot include:

- Voter does not have acceptable ID (see page 4)
- Voter lost their vote by mail ballot
- Voter is listed as having already cast a ballot, which voter thinks is an error



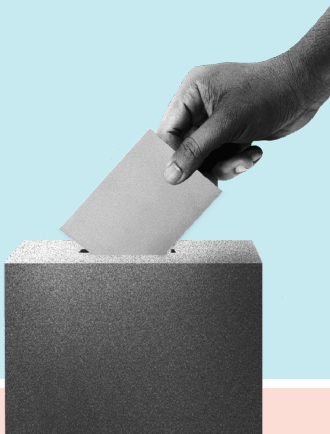
VOTING WHILE ON CAMPUS

Students can register to vote on campus if they are not registering and voting in another location or state. Your campus ID and your mailing address on campus can be used to register to vote. Find more information through your college or university.

VOTING WITH A CRIMINAL RECORD

If you have a criminal record, you can still vote in Illinois. You have the right to vote if you have been charged with a crime, but not convicted, if you are on probation, if you have been previously incarcerated but are not currently. You can vote in Illinois unless you are currently serving a sentence in any federal or state prison, county jail, or are on work release.

Find out more: www.aclu-il.org/CRVoting



VOTING WITH A DISABILITY

If you need help voting, you can receive assistance from any person you choose, as long as that person is not your employer or an officer of a union in which you are a member. Polling locations should have items to help with accessibility. Curbside voting is available, but you should try to call your local election authority at least a day in advance to set it up.

Find out more from Equip for Equality

VOTING WHILE HOSPITALIZED

If you are admitted to a hospital, nursing home or rehabilitation center less than 14 days before the election, you can fill out an “Application for Ballot for Qualified Voter Admitted to Hospital, Nursing Home or Rehabilitation Center” from your local election authority with a doctor’s signature. A legal relative or a registered voter who lives in the same precinct must get the ballot from your election authority, and return the ballot for you.

Find out more from Equip for Equality

VOTING WHILE HOUSELESS

If you are houseless, you can still vote. A letter confirming that you have permission to use the address of the drop-in center, shelter, or the person in whose home you are living can be used as your address to register to vote.

Find out more from the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless

VOTING IN THE MILITARY OR OVERSEAS

If you are not a permanent resident outside of the US, you can still request a mail in ballot using your registered address in Illinois. If you are serving in the military or permanently living outside of the US, you can register to vote and request a mail-in ballot without a permanent Illinois address through the Illinois Board of Elections' MOVE website.

Find out more from the Illinois Board of Elections

VOTING NON-ENGLISH SPEAKERS

Depending on the population of voters that speak a certain language in your county, your local election authority might be required to offer voting materials and ballots in other languages. If materials in the language you speak are not offered in your county, you can receive assistance voting from any person you choose, as long as that person is not your employer or an officer of a union in which you are a member.

TRANS AND NONBINARY VOTERS

You never need to show a photo ID to vote in Illinois. You can register, or verify your identity with other forms of identification (see list on page 4). If you do show the poll worker a photo ID, they should not be looking at the gender marker to verify your identity. A poll worker should not prevent you from voting just because you don't look like your picture or what the poll worker thinks you "should" look like based on your name or gender marker.

Find more information: www.aclu-il.org/IDvoting

Find links to these resources at www.aclu-il.org/KYRVoting

when are **ELECTIONS**

TYPES OF ELECTIONS

Primary Elections let the voters decide who will be on the ballot for the General Election. Each voter can only vote for candidates running in the primaries for the party's ballot that they choose. In Illinois, you can select any party ballot, even if you have voted a different party in previous primary elections.

General Elections let voters decide who will be representing them in that elected office. For each elected office on the ballot voters decide between candidates from different parties that won the Primary Election vote.

WHEN ELECTIONS TAKE PLACE

In **even numbered years**, Illinois voters vote on candidates for federal positions (President, members of Congress), state offices (Governor, State's Attorney, State Senators and Representatives...), as well at the county level (State's Attorney, County Clerk...). These elections take place the first or second Tuesday of November, with primaries typically happening in the Spring.

In **odd numbered years**, Illinois voters vote on candidates for local positions in their town or city (Mayors, Library Board, City Council...). These elections typically take place in the Spring, with primaries happening earlier that year.

Find upcoming Election dates: www.aclu-il.org/voting

know what's **ON YOUR BALLOT**

Find your sample ballot on the local election authority website for your county, or check with the Chicago Board of Elections.

CANDIDATES

Up and down the ballot, candidates are seeking public offices that will impact civil rights and civil liberties in our communities and state. It is not just federal offices that can impact the rights of your community - state, county, and local offices have an important impact. That is why it is important to research and vote for every elected office on every ballot, and make sure to find candidates that will support your values.

How to research the candidates for elected offices on your ballot:

- Check candidate's website, social media, local news sources, or attend local candidate events to speak to the candidate directly
- Check if organizations that you support have endorsements or information on the candidate's position
- Local bar associations, including county bar associations, are likely to post evaluations of the judicial candidates

BALLOT INITIATIVES

Ballot initiatives can have a state, countywide, or local impact. Find out more about the ballot initiative by checking the endorsements of organizations that you trust.

VOTER *checklist:*

- ☐ I have registered to vote or confirmed my registration status
- ☐ I have requested a mail-in ballot or found my local polling location
- ☐ I have gotten a sample ballot from my local election authority
- ☐ I researched my local races and ballot initiatives
- ☐ I have encouraged my friends to register and make a plan to vote
- ☐ I know my rights when voting in Illinois
- ☐ I have mailed in my ballot or made a plan to vote in person

vote, **OUR RIGHTS DEPEND ON IT**

Voting is the power each of us has to decide the values and policies that are in place for our local community, as well as our state and country. If we want to see changes in those policies, if we want government to advance and protect civil liberties, then each of us must play our role to bring about fundamental change. Creating this change begins with exercising our ability to vote.

Together, we can protect and advance civil liberties and fundamental freedoms for all. Together, we can continue the effort to create a more perfect union.

To continue this work, each of us needs to vote like our rights depend on it – because they do.



Find more information about upcoming elections,
including important links and dates, at:
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