

2026 ILLINOIS VOTER GUIDE

General Primary Election: March 17, 2026
General Election: November 3, 2026

FOR VOTING BY
MAIL

#LandofLincolnVotes2026

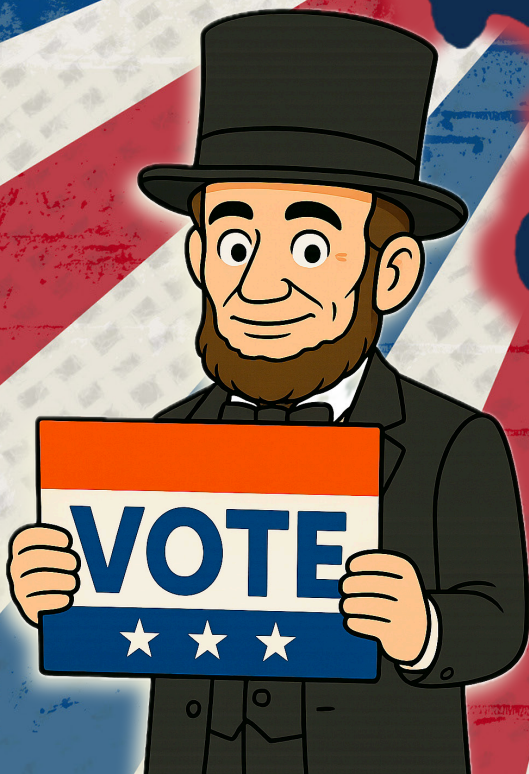




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Registering To Vote In Illinois

What Are The Voter Registration Requirements?

- ☒ Must be a U.S. Citizen;
- ☒ Must be 18 years old to vote in the General Election or 17 years of age to vote in Consolidated Primary or General Primary if the individual will be 18 by the time of the General Election;
- ☒ Must have been a resident of the precinct at least 30 days prior to Election Day.

Where Can I Register?

- County Clerk's Office
- Board of Election Commissioner's Office
- City and Village Offices
- Township Offices
- Schools
- Public Libraries
- Military Recruitment Offices
- Locations specifically designated by the election authority
- Online

Can I Register To Vote By Mailing An Application To My Election Office?

Yes, you can register to vote by sending in a mail-in application. These applications are available at various public and private locations, and you can also download them from the Illinois State Board of Elections website at elections.il.gov. When using the mail-in form, ensure it is postmarked before the registration deadline. If you fail to include the required identification with your application, you will need to vote in person for your first time.

Can I Register To Vote Or Update My Voter Registration Online In Illinois?

Yes. An individual may register to vote or update their existing voter registration by visiting ova.elections.il.gov

To use this option, an applicant must provide:

- (1)** the full Illinois driver's license or State identification number;
- (2)** the last 4 digits of your social security number; and
- (3)** the date the Illinois driver's license or State identification card was issued.

If I Move, Can I Still Vote?

- **Moved within 27 days, same precinct?**

You can vote a full ballot—just sign an affidavit.

- **Moved more than 30 days ago, same election jurisdiction but different precinct, and didn't update registration?**

You can still register and vote through Grace Period Registration until Election Day. Or, vote Federal offices only after filling out an address correction form.

- **Moved within 30 days, different precinct but still in Illinois, and didn't update registration?**

You can either: Register at your new address and vote through the grace period, or Vote a full ballot at your old polling place after signing an affidavit.

- **Moved more than 30 days ago to a new county/municipality with a different election authority?**

You must re-register at your new address to vote.

Reminder: If your name or address has changed, contact your election authority to update your registration. But don't worry—Grace Period Registration and Voting is available all the way through Election Day!

Can I Vote If I Have Gone To Jail Or Prison?

You can vote if:

- **You have been released from incarceration** on parole, mandatory supervised release, or electronic monitoring
- **You have been charged but not convicted** You can vote if you are in jail pre-trial. You can also vote if you have been released on bail or bond, are not convicted for the crime you are detained for, are under electronic monitoring, or have recently been arrested but never convicted
- **You are on probation**
- **You have been incarcerated before**, but are not currently
- **You are homeless or don't have a permanent living situation**

What If I Forget To Register?

Missed the registration deadline? No problem!

Illinois offers Grace Period Registration and Voting all the way up to—and on—Election Day. To use it, you must register and vote in person at the same time. It is available only at designated locations set by your local election authority. Grace period registration starts the day after regular registration closes (27 days before the election) and runs through Election Day. You can find your Grace Period Registration and Voting location here:

<https://www.elections.il.gov/VotingAndRegistrationSystems/EarlyVotingLocationsSearch.aspx>

Additional Voter Registration Resources

Watch our YouTube video playlist on voter registration [HERE](#).

For voter registration information in other states visit: [vote.gov](https://www.vote.gov)

What Is Required To Register To Vote In Illinois?

If you are registering to vote in person or by mail (and do not use your SSN or DL on the application), TWO forms of ID will be required.

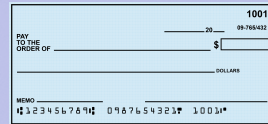
Valid Forms Of ID Include:



Driver's License or State ID



Utility Bill



Government Check or Paycheck



Bank Statement



Lease or Mortgage



Student ID & Mail Addressed to Address of Residence



Passport



Other Government Document

At Least One Form Of ID Must Have Your Current Address

If You Register Online You Will Need:



Illinois Driver's License or State ID



Last Four of Your SSN

Register Online At ova.elections.il.gov

Know Your Ballot

What Is A Ballot?

A ballot is a document that outlines the candidates and issues you are voting on. It includes names of individuals running for various positions, such as Governor, Congressperson, and Senator. When casting your vote, you indicate your preference by marking the ballot. If you are using a paper ballot instead of a voting machine, be sure to check both sides, as there may be additional choices listed there.

What Is An Advisory Question?

- Advisory questions serve as guidance for lawmakers but do not ensure any resulting legislation.
- Lawmakers in Illinois are not obligated to enact bills based on the outcomes of advisory questions.

What Is A Ballot Measure?

Ballot measures empower citizens to vote directly on proposed laws and constitutional changes, rather than depending solely on legislative bodies. In Illinois, there are several types of ballot measures.

- Citizens can initiate constitutional amendments by collecting a specified number of signatures, which is 8% of the total votes cast for governor in the last election.
- Alternatively, the Illinois General Assembly can propose amendments if they achieve a 60% majority in both chambers.
- Lawmakers can submit certain state laws to the voters for their approval. There are also advisory questions that seek to understand public opinion on various topics, although these do not carry legal weight.

Where Can I See My Ballot Before I Vote?

To view your sample ballot, you can either visit the website of your local election authority or go to their office in person. For more information about your election authority, you can check this link:

<https://www.elections.il.gov/ElectionOperations/ElectionAuthorities.aspx>

How Do I Mark My Ballot?

The way you mark your ballot will vary based on your voting method and local regulations.

- If you are casting a paper ballot at a polling place, be sure to follow the instructions provided by the election judge, and look for posted signs that explain how to complete your ballot.
- For those voting by mail, adhere to the guidelines included with your ballot.
- If you are using a touch screen or an assistive device, again, follow the directions from your election judge.

It's important to remember that even when using electronic devices, a paper ballot will be printed for insertion into the tabulator, as Illinois mandates a complete paper trail for all ballots.

Additional Ballot Resources

Watch our YouTube video playlist on ballots: [HERE](#).

Voting In Person

Where Do I Need To Go To Vote?

When you head out to cast your vote on election day, the location where you do this is known as your polling place. If you're registered to vote, you can easily locate your designated polling place by visiting the State Board of Elections' website at

<https://ova.elections.il.gov/PollingPlaceLookup.aspx>.

Do I Need An ID To Vote In Person?

If you are registering to vote in person during the Grace Period or if you registered by mail without using your Social Security number or driver's license, you will need to provide two forms of identification to cast your vote. Additionally, If your voting rights are challenged at the polling place by election judges, other voters, or poll watchers, you may be asked to show identification. If you're unable to provide proof of identity or eligibility, you will still be able to cast a provisional ballot.

What If I Need Help With Filling Out My Ballot?

Assistance in voting refers to helping a specific voter with tasks such as marking and casting their ballot, ensuring this occurs privately in a voting booth during early voting or on Election Day. Only voters who genuinely require help, such as those who are blind, have physical disabilities, or struggle with reading, writing, or speaking English, are eligible for assistance. It's important to note that intoxicated voters do not qualify for this support. All voters needing assistance must be registered and can also request help with the registration process.

If a voter does not designate someone to assist them, they may receive help from two election judges, one from each political party. However, individuals such as an officer or agent from the voter's employer or union are prohibited from providing assistance. Assistance can only be given upon the voter's request and after completing the necessary affidavit, which both the voter and the assistant must sign. Additionally, the election judge must mark the voter's Application for Ballot to indicate that assistance was requested, and all assistance must occur privately, with the assistant casting the vote strictly as directed by the voter.

Can I Vote Outside The Polling Place If It Is Inaccessible?

Any voter who is elderly or has a disability and cannot access a polling place due to its structural features can request to vote curbside. This option is available to anyone who cannot enter the polling location.

Voters may either cast their ballot from their vehicle or receive their ballot at the point where access becomes difficult. The location must be no more than 50 feet from the polling place entrance.

The voting process outside the polling place involves two judges from different political parties delivering an application to the voter. Once the voter completes the application, it is returned to the polling place for verification. After confirming the voter's eligibility, they are provided with a ballot, a marking device, and a portable voting booth to ensure privacy while marking their ballot. Ballots cannot be delivered more than 50 feet from the polling place entrance. Once the voter has finished, the judges will take the ballot, secured in a secrecy sleeve, back inside for it to be placed in the ballot

Can I Vote Early?

Any registered voter in Illinois can vote early—no excuse needed!

You can vote before Election Day by going in person to your local election authority's office or an early voting site set up in your area.

Early voting is available to all voters, and you don't need to give a reason to vote early. Ballots cast during early voting are securely stored and will be counted after polls close on Election Day.

You can find your early voting location here:

<https://www.elections.il.gov/VotingAndRegistrationSystems/EarlyVotingLocationsSearch.aspx>

Additional Ballot Resources

Watch our YouTube video playlist on ballots: [HERE](#).

Voting By Mail

Can I Vote By Mail?

- All registered voters in Illinois may vote by
- Members of the U.S. Armed Forces, including those on active duty, as well as Merchant Marine personnel and U.S. government employees stationed abroad, along with their spouses and dependents who will be away from their home county on Election Day, are also entitled to vote by mail.
- U.S. citizens who are temporarily outside the country, along with their spouses and voting-age dependents living with them, can maintain their voting rights in Illinois if they have a registered precinct residence and can vote by mail.
- State and federal employees, along with their spouses, who had a voting residence in their precinct before starting their employment but now live elsewhere due to their job, can still vote in their original precinct.
- Voters with print disabilities can use Accessible Vote by Mail to receive their ballot electronically, mark it privately and independently at home on their own device, and then return it by mail. This is not electronic voting-ballots are always mailed back.

How Do I Request A Mail-In Ballot?

To request a vote by mail ballot, voters need to obtain an application from their election authority, either in person or online. After filling out and signing the application, it should be returned to the election authority. You can apply for a vote by mail ballot online at this link:

<https://www.elections.il.gov/ElectionOperations/VotingByMailAgreement.aspx>

*There are unique processes for military and overseas voters to register and request a vote by mail ballot. Please view our Voter Guide for Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting for more information.

What Is The Deadline For Requesting My Ballot?

The last day to request a mail-in ballot for the primary election is **March 12, 2026.**

For the general election, the deadline is **October 29, 2026.**

What If I Need Help With Filling Out My Ballot?

If a voter needs help casting their ballot, the name and address of the person assisting must be included on the ballot certification envelope. It's important to remember that a candidate can only assist a voter if they are a spouse, parent, child, or sibling of that voter.

Do I Need To Sign My Ballot Envelope?

The application and ballot envelope must both be signed. These signatures confirm that the information on the application is correct. Additionally, the signature on the envelope verifies that the voter is casting their own ballot privately.

How Do I Return My Ballot?

Mailed ballots must be postmarked by Election Day and received within 14 days after the election. If available, voters can return their mail-in ballots to a drop box without postage before polls close on Election Day. Additionally, ballots can be submitted directly to the election authority's office.

Can Someone Return My Ballot For Me?

A voter can permit someone else to return their ballot to the election authority, provided the voter has signed the affidavit on the ballot envelope confirming this authorization.

Additional Vote By Mail Resources

Watch our YouTube video playlist on Voting By Mail: [HERE.](#)

VOTING BY MAIL FACT SHEET

How to Vote by Mail This Election in Illinois

Voting by mail is one of the safe and secure ways to cast a vote in Illinois, and is one of the several ways to cast your ballot prior to Election Day. You may request your vote by mail ballot through the mail, in person, or online if available through your election authority. You can return your ballot via mail, in person to your election authority's office, or drop box if available.

You also have the option to request to be placed on the permanent vote by mail list. You will then receive a ballot for every subsequent election until you are removed from the list.

Requesting a Vote by Mail Ballot

➔ Step 1: Make sure you're registered to vote.

Anyone can vote by mail in Illinois without an excuse, as long as they are registered to vote.

If you need to register you can

- **Register online**

If you know the last 4 digits of your SSN and you have an Illinois Driver's License or State ID number, you can register at ova.elections.il.gov

- **Register by mail**

Printable registration forms are available at elections.il.gov

- **Register in person**

You can register in person at your election authority's office

If you need to check to see if you're already registered:

- **Check online**

You can check your registration status at any time online at ova.elections.il.gov/registrationlookup.aspx



DON'T FORGET!

Regular Registration Closes:

October 6, 2026

Online Registration Closes:

October 18, 2026

➔ Step 2: Request your vote by mail ballot

You may request an application in person or online at elections.il.gov

Your application must include

- Name
- Home address
- Address you want the ballot sent
- Party affiliation (for the primary)
- Signature

If submitted by mail outside the US, an application must be made at least 30 days prior to the election to receive a full ballot!

Request an application today!

First day to request
August 5, 2026

Last day to request
October 29, 2026 (any way other than in person)



VOTING BY MAIL FACT SHEET

Submitting your vote by mail ballot

Step 3: Filling out your Vote by Mail ballot

Before you begin voting

- Make sure you received the correct ballot for the party primary you wish to vote in
- Carefully read the instructions on how to fill out the ballot

Voting

- Fill out the ballot using the marking method outlined in the instructions,
- Make sure to flip the ballot over and vote the choices on the back (if applicable!)

After you've filled out the ballot

- Sign the certification located on the ballot envelope
- Place the ballot in this envelope and seal it

If you need assistance voting your ballot, the name and address of the individual providing the assistance must be filled in on the ballot envelope.

First day to mail ballots to voters:

September 24, 2026



Step 4: Returning your ballot to be counted

There are several ways to return your ballot. You can use the one most convenient for you!

By Mail

- Postage is typically around \$1.40
- The US postal service will deliver all ballots it receives, even those with improper postage
- All ballots must be **postmarked by Election Day and received by November 17, 2026**

In person

- You can hand-deliver your ballot to your local election authority's [office](#) up to and on Election Day
- If someone else is delivering your ballot for you, they must sign the affidavit on the ballot acknowledging third-party delivery

By Dropbox

- Some jurisdictions offer secure drop boxes for returning vote by mail ballots
- These are available until 7pm on Election Day
- You can find out if your election authority has a Dropbox location available by visiting elections.il.gov and clicking on [Voting by Mail Dropbox Locations](#)

Still have questions or want to learn more about the elections process in Illinois?

You can find out more about voting by mail and about how we are keeping elections safe and

secure in Illinois by visiting elections.il.gov



Illinois Offers Permanent Vote by Mail!

- Once your local election authority receives and processes your application for Permanent Vote by Mail status, you'll automatically receive official ballots for every election.
- This includes primaries – for these elections, a party must be declared. If you do not declare a party, you may not receive a primary ballot if there are no non-partisan offices or public questions on the primary ballot.
- Once you are on the Permanent Vote by Mail list, you no longer need to submit a Vote by Mail ballot request for each subsequent election.
- You will remain on the Permanent Vote by Mail list unless you request to be removed, you move out of the jurisdiction, or your registration changes.

You can find an application for permanent Vote by Mail on our website [HERE](#) or you can contact your election authority for an application.



Requested A Vote By Mail Ballot But Want To Vote In Person?

If you request a mail-in ballot but later choose to vote in person at a polling location, bring your mail-in ballot with you and hand it over to the election officials present at the site.

Failing to present your mail-in ballot may result in your ability to cast only a provisional ballot, which necessitates additional steps to confirm your vote is counted after the election.

Provisional ballots are not immediately processed through the tabulator; instead, they are returned to the election judges after voting is completed.

Your provisional ballot will only be counted once your eligibility to vote is verified by your election authority, ensuring that all votes are legitimate and preventing any instances of double voting.

This procedure is designed to maintain the integrity of the electoral process and safeguard against fraudulent voting practices.

Vote by Mail Signature Verification & Ballot Curing

1

When you vote by mail, each jurisdiction keeps a list of who requested a ballot and when their ballot is returned.

2

After you mail in your ballot, two election judges, one from each political party, or official staff, verify your signature with their database.

3

Once your signature is verified, the ballot is removed from the certification envelope and processed through tabulation equipment.

4

If your signature doesn't match, you will be sent a notice that your ballot has been rejected. You will be given instructions for how to get your ballot reinstated.

5

The most common reasons officials reject a ballot are because the envelope is not signed, the signature does not match the one on file, or the ballot envelope was not sealed properly.

6

Voters are notified by mail of a rejected ballot within two days of rejection.

7

Voters have 14 days after the election to resolve the issue with their election authority.

8

Once you resolve the issue with your election office, **your vote will be counted.**



Mail Voting Is Safe And Secure

8 states—California, Colorado, Hawaii, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Vermont and Washington as well as the District of Columbia—allow all elections to be conducted entirely by mail.

2 states—Nebraska and North Dakota—permit counties to opt into elections by mail.

9 states—Alaska, Arizona, Florida, Kansas, Maryland, Missouri, Montana, New Mexico and Wyoming—allow specific small elections to be conducted by mail.

4 states—Idaho, Minnesota, New Jersey, and New Mexico—permit mostly-mail elections for certain small jurisdictions.

The United States Postal Service operates a specialized election mail program that features an intelligent mail barcoding system to ensure a secure chain of custody.

All States Allow Voting By Mail In Some Form.



Mail Voting Is Safe And Secure

Every Mail Ballot Is Verified For Eligibility After It Is Returned By The Voter.

- Mail ballot envelopes generally require a voter's signature, identification number, or other identifying details.
- Election officials verify the signature against the official registration records prior to counting the ballot.
- If a voter casts multiple mail ballots or attempts to vote in person after voting by mail, only one ballot will be accepted, and the double voting will be reported for investigation.

Dates For 2026 Primary Election

DEC
17

First Day To Request A
Vote By Mail Ballot

JAN
2

First Day Military and
Overseas voters To
Apply To Vote By Mail

FEB
17

Close Of Regular
Voter Registration

FEB
18

First Day Of Grace
Period Voting And
Registration

MAR
1

Last Day Of Online
Voter Registration

MAR
3

First Day That A Qualified Voter Admitted To A Hospital,
Nursing Home, Or Rehabilitation Center Can Apply For The
Personal Delivery Of A Ballot

MAR
9

Last Day Military and
Overseas Voters And
Their Family To Apply To
Vote By Mail

MAR
12

Last Day To Request A
Vote By Mail Ballot

FEB
5

First Day To Vote Early

FEB
5

First Day To Mail Vote
By Mail Ballots

FEB
17

Last Day Citizens Living
Abroad To Apply To Register
And To Vote By Mail

MAR
9

Last Day Citizens Living
Abroad But Otherwise
Registered To Apply To Vote
By Mail

MAR
13-16

Nursing Home Voting

MAR
17

General Primary Election Day

Dates For 2026 General Election

**AUG
5**

First Day To Request A
Vote By Mail Ballot

**SEP
24**

First Day To Mail Vote
By Mail Ballots

**OCT
6**

Close Of Regular
Voter Registration

**OCT
18**

Last Day Of Online
Voter Registration

**OCT
20**

First Day That A Qualified Voter To A Hospital, Nursing
Home, Or Rehabilitation Center Can Apply For The Personal
Delivery Of A Ballot

**OCT
26**

Last Day For Services
Members And Their
Family To Apply To Vote
By Mail

**OCT
29**

Last Day To Request A
Vote By Mail Ballot

**SEP
24**

First Day To Vote Early

**OCT
5**

Last Day Citizens Living
Abroad To Apply To Register
And To Vote By Mail

**OCT
7**

First Day Of Grace Period
Voting And Registration

**OCT
26**

Last Day Citizens Living
Abroad But Otherwise
Registered To Apply To Vote
By Mail

**OCT 30-
NOV 2**

Nursing Home Voting

**NOV
3**

General Election Day