

# ABOUT REGISTRATION AND VOTING: FOR VOTERS

**These are commonly asked questions, answers provided on the following pages will help you and voters you are helping to register understand the registration and voting process.**

- Am I eligible to register and to vote?
- When can I register to vote?
- How much does it cost to register?
- Where can I find a voter registration form?
- Must I be able to read or write in English in order to register?
- Am I registered once I fill out and mail the registration form?
- When do I have to re-register to vote?
- What if I move between registration and Election Day?
- If I fail to vote in an election, will I remain registered for the next one?
- Can I register for someone else?
- How do I join a political party?
- What if my polling place is not accessible to the disabled?
- When are the polls open?
- Can I vote by mail?
- Do I need identification when I go to vote?
- What if I need help in marking my ballot?
- How long may I stay in the polling booth?
- What if I make a mistake on my ballot?
- What will I be voting on?

# REGISTRATION AND VOTING FAQ'S FOR VOTERS

## Am I eligible to register and to vote?

**Yes**, if you are:

- a citizen of the United States
- a legal resident of your state
- at least 18 years old by election day
- not in prison, on probation or parole for a felony conviction
- a convicted felon whose voting rights have been restored (varies – check local laws)
- not declared mentally incompetent by a court (varies – check local laws)

## When can I register to vote?

You can register at any time up until your state's deadline for the election in which you wish to vote. (See state info in the Appendix)

## How much does it cost to register?

Registration and voting are always **free of charge**. Contact your local elections board if you are being asked to pay a fee!

## Where can I find a voter registration form?

Voter registration forms are available at post offices, libraries, fire stations, Departments of Motor Vehicles, welfare departments, Registrars of Voters, and City/County Elections offices. Also, many social service agencies have forms.

# REGISTRATION AND VOTING FAQ'S FOR VOTERS CONT.

## **Must I be able to read or write in English in order to register?**

**No.** You may register and vote even if you cannot read or write. You may take to the voting booth a literate and registered individual who can assist you in the voting process, but not actually vote for you.

## **Am I registered once I fill out and mail the registration form?**

**No.** You can't be sure you are registered until you get a voter notification card from the county. If the notification card does not arrive within three weeks of mailing your registration, call your Registrar of Voters or City/County Elections Office and ask if you are registered.

## **When do I have to re-register to vote?**

If you move, change your name, want to change your political party, or have completed all conditions of a felony charge, you must register again. Registration rules and procedures for convicted felons vary by state (check with your City/County Elections Office).

## **What if I move between registration and Election Day?**

You may still vote by returning to your former precinct or by requesting a vote-by-mail ballot.

## **If I fail to vote in an election, will I remain registered for the next one?**

You should be, but several states have been purging non-active voters. It is always best to check with your local elections office to be sure your registration is current.

## **Can I register for someone else?**

No. You can only register for yourself. However, you may help others fill out a form, but they must sign the form.



# REGISTRATION AND VOTING FAQ'S FOR VOTERS CONT.

## **How do I join a political party?**

Check the box for the political party of your choice on the registration form. There are no requirements to join a political party.

## **What if my polling place is not accessible to the disabled?**

In most states, you may vote by absentee ballot. Check with your local City/County Elections office to learn what you should do. If you prefer to vote in person, get as close to your polling place as you can and a precinct board member will bring you a ballot to cast.

## **When are the polls open?**

The time polls are open on election day varies by state (Washington State now requires all ballots to be mailed in). However, usual hours are from 7:00 a.m. until 8:00 p.m. Many states also allow early voting. Check with your local City/County Elections office to learn exact dates and times.

## **Can I vote by mail?**

Contact your City/County Elections Office for information on obtaining an absentee ballot and about deadlines. Washington State now requires all ballots to be mailed.

## **Do I need identification when I go to vote?**

In most cases you will just be asked to state your name and address and to sign the roster of voters. Bring along your voter registration card. However, several states have recently enacted voter ID laws. See the appendix of state rules to see if they affect your registration.

## **What if I need help in marking my ballot?**

Elections Officials are available at the polling place to assist you.

# REGISTRATION AND VOTING FAQ'S FOR VOTERS CONT.

## How long may I stay in the polling booth?

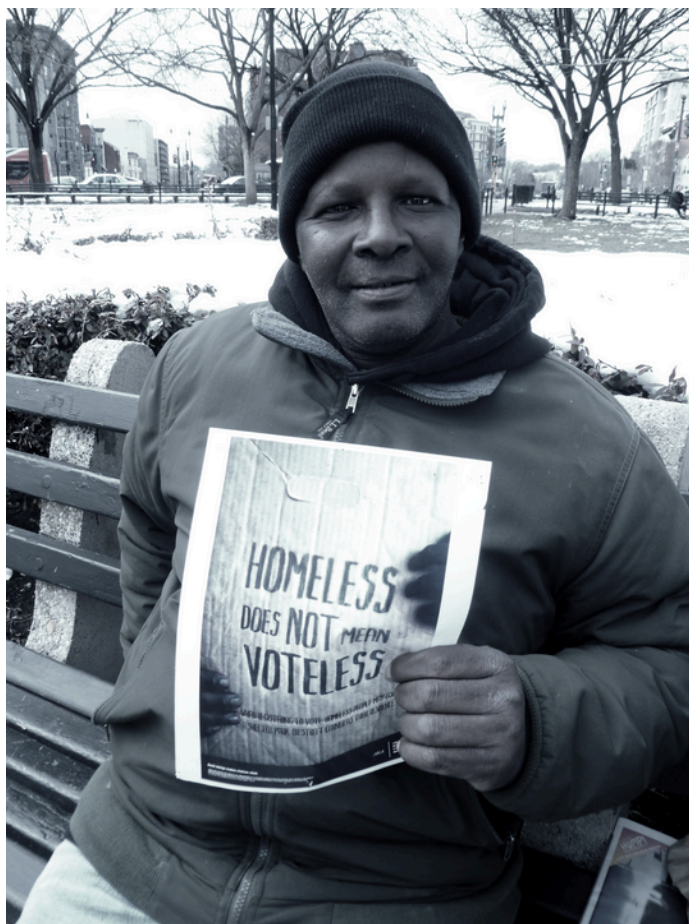
Take your time. Some states limit voting to ten minutes, but will extend that time if no other voters are waiting. You may take your pre-marked Sample Ballot into the polling place for assistance.

## What if I make a mistake on my ballot?

You may request another ballot if necessary.

## What will I be voting on?

We vote on two types of things: **People** (candidates who are running for elected office) and **Plans** (ballot measures that change local or state laws). You do not have to vote on everything. You can just vote on the things you care about.



## TIP FOR ALL VOTERS:

If your name does not appear on the computerized polling list or you are told that you are not eligible to vote: **Demand an affidavit or paper ballot.**

After election day, the Board of Elections will check its records, and your vote will be counted if you are indeed eligible to vote. If not, you will receive a notice that you are not eligible, along with a registration application for later elections.