

Voter Registration Guide



Updated October 2026 | For community organizations and service providers.

Summary

This guide helps individuals—especially people experiencing homelessness or housing instability—understand how to register to vote and participate in elections in New York State. It covers eligibility, registration methods, identity verification, voting without a permanent address, voting rights after a felony conviction, confidentiality options, and Western New York election offices.

People can register online, in person, or by mail. A permanent home address is not required to register, but election officials need information that establishes a voting residence and a way to receive election-related mail. When a person is unsure which address or process to use, refer them to their county Board of Elections.

Important note

This guide is for general information and is not legal advice. Election rules and deadlines can change. Confirm current deadlines, ballot options, and individual circumstances with the New York State Board of Elections or the appropriate county Board of Elections.

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1. Introduction to voter registration

Voter registration allows eligible residents to participate in elections for the districts where they live. As a caseworker or service provider, you can help people find official information, locate registration forms, understand deadlines, and contact election officials when they have questions.

Offer assistance without steering anyone toward a candidate or political party. Registration and voting are free. A person should make their own choices about whether to register, party enrollment, candidates, and ballot questions.

2. Eligibility to register in New York State

To register to vote in New York State, a person must:

- Be a United States citizen.
- Be 18 years old by Election Day to vote. Eligible 16- and 17-year-olds may preregister but cannot vote until they are 18.
- Have been a resident of New York State and the county, city, or village for at least 30 days before the election.
- Not be incarcerated in prison for a felony conviction.
- Not have been adjudged mentally incompetent by a court.
- Not claim the right to vote elsewhere.

Official eligibility guidance: <https://elections.ny.gov/voter-registration-process>

3. Ways to register

Online

Use the New York State online voter registration system. A NY.gov ID is required. People who already have a NY.gov ID may use it; those who do not will need to create an account. The portal can also be used to update registration information.

Online registration information: <https://elections.ny.gov/register-vote>

Direct online portal: <https://nyovr.elections.ny.gov/>

Note: the direct portal requires a NY.gov ID login. If someone does not want to create or use an account, they can use a paper form or register in person.

In person

People may register in person at:

- Their county Board of Elections.
- A New York State agency-based voter registration center.
- The Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV). DMV website registration is available to people with DMV-issued identification.

By mail

Download or request a New York State Voter Registration Form, complete it, print it, and sign and date it. Mail or deliver it to the appropriate county Board of Elections. A form completed electronically still needs a handwritten signature when submitted as a paper form.

Need a form in Spanish?

Visit the New York State Board of Elections voter registration page for registration forms and instructions, including available translated forms: <https://elections.ny.gov/register-vote>

People who need help understanding a form can contact their county Board of Elections to ask about language-access assistance.

Registration forms and instructions: <https://elections.ny.gov/register-vote>

People may also call 1-800-FOR-VOTE to request a form.

Paper registration forms may also be available through community organizations and public agencies. Call ahead to confirm availability. The New York State Board of Elections website provides downloadable forms in multiple languages: <https://elections.ny.gov/voter-registration-process>

4. Registration forms and identity verification

The state uses the information on a registration application to try to verify identity before Election Day. The application asks for a New York driver's license or non-driver ID number, or the last four digits of the applicant's Social Security number.

If a person has neither a DMV number nor a Social Security number, the state says they may provide a valid photo ID, current utility bill, bank statement, paycheck, government check, or another government document showing their name and address. A copy may be submitted with the registration form.

If election officials cannot verify identity before Election Day, the voter will be asked to provide identification when voting for the first time. This does not mean every registered voter must show photo ID at every election. Contact the county Board of Elections if a voter needs help understanding what documentation to bring.

Official identity-verification guidance: <https://elections.ny.gov/election-security>

5. Voting rights after a felony conviction

In New York State, a person convicted of a felony regains the right to register and vote upon release from incarceration, even if they are on parole or post-release supervision. A person on probation may register. A person with a felony conviction in another state may also register in New York if they meet New York's eligibility requirements and are not currently incarcerated in prison for a felony conviction.

A person must register again for their voting rights to be fully restored. People with questions about their individual circumstances should contact their county Board of Elections.

Official voting-after-incarceration guidance: <https://elections.ny.gov/election-security>

6. Voting without a permanent address

People experiencing homelessness can register to vote. A traditional home address is not required, but the registration process needs a location that can be used to establish the person's voting residence and a mailing address for election-related correspondence.

Voting residence

A person can use a description of the location where they live or sleep—such as a park or street intersection—to help election officials determine the correct voting district. A shelter address may also be appropriate depending on the person's circumstances. The location used for voting residence is not a mailing address. If the person is unsure how to record their location, contact the county Board of Elections for instructions.

Mailing address

The mailing address can be different from the voting residence. It may be a shelter, service agency, religious organization, General Delivery where available, or another location where the person has permission to receive mail. Confirm that the location can accept mail on the person's behalf.

If someone moves, they should check whether their registration needs to be updated. If they are unsure what to enter, contact the county Board of Elections before submitting the form.

General guidance for voters without housing: <https://vote.gov/guide-to-voting/unhoused>

New York State voter registration: <https://elections.ny.gov/register-vote>

7. Frequently asked questions and accessibility

Does registration cost money?

No. Registering and voting are free. Contact the county Board of Elections if anyone asks for payment to register.

Do I have to read or write English to register?

A person may register even if they cannot read or write English. Voters who need help completing a form or voting should contact their county Board of Elections to ask about available assistance and language-access services.

What if my polling place is inaccessible?

Contact the county Board of Elections to discuss accessibility needs and available voting options. New York provides accessible voting resources, including accessible absentee voting options for eligible voters with print disabilities.

Accessible voting information: <https://elections.ny.gov/accessible-voting>

Can I vote if my registration address changed?

Update registration when possible. If a voter moved within New York and did not update their registration, they should contact their county Board of Elections or ask poll workers about the appropriate procedure at the polling place. Do not assume the voter must give up on voting.

How can I get a replacement voter registration card?

If you need a replacement voter registration card or have questions about your registration status, contact your county Board of Elections.

You can also check your registration status online using New York State's voter lookup tool:
<https://voterlookup.elections.ny.gov/>

Can someone help me vote?

Yes. Voters who need assistance can ask for help at their polling place. New York State provides assistance for voters with access needs, and voters may request a ballot-marking device to help them mark their ballot privately and independently. Contact your county Board of Elections for information about available assistance and accommodation.

8. Confidential voter registration and the Address Confidentiality Program

New York State's Address Confidentiality Program (ACP) may be available to eligible New York residents who are victims of domestic violence, stalking, sexual assault, or human trafficking and to certain reproductive health care providers, employees, volunteers, patients, and immediate family members. The

program provides a legal substitute address and forwards certain mail. Eligibility and enrollment requirements are determined by the Department of State.

ACP participants who want to register to vote should complete the New York State Statement of Confidential Voter and contact their county Board of Elections for next steps. This election-law confidentiality process is related to, but distinct from, the Department of State's ACP. Participants should not disclose their confidential physical address on a public registration form; they can contact the ACP or their county Board of Elections for assistance.

NYS Address Confidentiality Program: <https://elections.ny.gov/election-security>

Confidential voter registration: <https://elections.ny.gov/Confidential-Registration>

ACP information line: (518) 474-7306 or (855) 350-4595. For safety planning or local support, contact the New York State Domestic and Sexual Violence Hotline at 1-800-942-6906.

9. Updating registration and key 2026 dates

Changing a name, address, or party enrollment

Voters can use the online registration portal or a paper registration form to update their name or address and to change party enrollment. Party-enrollment changes generally must be received by February 14 to take effect for that year's primary. For 2026, changes submitted after February 14 took effect June 30, 2026. Check the current calendar for future years.

Update or change registration: <https://elections.ny.gov/register-vote>

2026 General Election

- General Election Day: Tuesday, November 3, 2026.
- Early voting: Saturday, October 24 through Sunday, November 1, 2026. Hours and locations vary by county; check the county Board of Elections before traveling.
- Voter registration deadline: Saturday, October 24, 2026. Applications must be received by the appropriate Board of Elections by this date to be eligible to vote in the November 3 General Election. Do not confuse this with the later November 2 deadline for certain in-person early mail or absentee ballot requests.
- Mail ballot request and return deadlines differ by method. Consult the official 2026 calendar rather than relying on dates from prior elections.

Official 2026 election deadlines: <https://elections.ny.gov/2026-election-deadlines-poster>

Registration and voting deadlines: <https://elections.ny.gov/registration-and-voting-deadlines>

10. Western New York election offices and useful links

Erie County Board of Elections

134 West Eagle Street, Buffalo, NY 14202

Phone: (716) 858-8891

[Home - Erie County Board of Elections](https://elections.erie.gov/)

(<https://elections.erie.gov/>)

Genesee County Board of Elections

County Building I, 15 Main Street, Batavia, NY 14020

Phone: (585) 815-7804

[Board of Elections - Genesee County, New York](#)

(<https://www.geneseeny.gov/Department-Content/Board-of-Elections>)

Niagara County Board of Elections

111 Main Street, Suite 100, Lockport, NY 14094

Phone: (716) 438-4041 / (716) 438-4040

[Niagara County Board of Elections – Niagara County Board of Elections](#)

(<https://elections.niagaracounty.gov/>)

Orleans County Board of Elections

14016 State Route 31 West, Albion, NY 14411.

Phone: (585) 589-3274

[Orleans County NY Board of Elections](#)

(<https://www.orleanscountyny.gov/government/elections/index.php>)

Wyoming County Board of Elections

4 Perry Avenue, Warsaw, NY 14569

Phone: (585) 786-8931

[Board of Elections | Wyoming County, NY](#)

(<https://www.wyomingcountyny.gov/162/Board-of-Elections>)

Additional resources

- New York State Board of Elections: <https://elections.ny.gov/>
- Check voter registration, find a polling place, and track a ballot: <https://voterlookup.elections.ny.gov/>
- New York State voter registration information: <https://elections.ny.gov/register-vote>
- League of Women Voters: <https://www.lwv.org/>
- Buffalo/Niagara League of Women Voters: <https://lwvbn.org/>
- Vote.gov guidance for voters without housing: <https://vote.gov/guide-to-voting/unhoused>