

**I-866-OUR-VOTE  
(1-866-687-8683)****Disclaimer:**

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**VOTER REGISTRATION FORMS**

There are several ways to get a voter registration form. The form can be downloaded from the State Board of Elections website at <http://www.elections.il.gov/Downloads/VotingInformation/PDF/R-19.pdf>. Applications for registration can be obtained from the County Clerk, the Board of Election Commissioner's office, local voter registration offices, public libraries, several schools and most state agencies (such as the Department of Public Health and the Department of Human Services). Individuals can also register when applying for services at the Department of Motor Vehicles, the Department of Employment Services and the Department of Health Care and Family Services.

**1) Are there restrictions on registering to vote using a photocopied voter registration form?**

There is no legislative prohibition in Illinois that bars individuals or groups from copying blank or completed voter registration applications before they are submitted. In fact, election officials entitled to accept voter registration forms may not refuse to accept a voter registration form because such form is printed on photocopier or regular paper stock.

**2) Are there restrictions on the use of the National Voter Registration Form?**

According to 10 ILCS 5/1A-16 (d): "The voter registration form described in this Section shall be consistent with the form prescribed by the Federal Election Commission under the National Voter Registration Act of 1993, P.L. 103-31, as amended from time to time, and the Help America Vote Act of 2002, P.L. 107-252, in all relevant respects."

Illinois has a "bottom-up" voter registration system, which means that the jurisdictions, which are largely counties as well as a few municipalities, make many decisions regarding whether to accept certain types of voter registration forms. As these types of decisions are made at a local level, according to the Illinois State Board of Elections, it is difficult to make any blanket statements regarding registration form acceptability. There is no uniform standard for accepting the NVRF. Some jurisdictions choose to use the NVRF when registering voters, some jurisdictions use the State voter registration form, and some counties have their own voter registration forms. Presently, according to the State Board of Elections, there are no authorities that are so strict as to not accept the NVRF, but it is within their authority to do so.

**3) Are there restrictions regarding the use of registration form information?**

The State Board of Elections compiles a database of voter registration information provided by the 110 Illinois election jurisdictions. Illinois counties (and 8 cities) submit data to the Board electronically on a

regular basis, usually nightly. Voter data is available to registered political committees for bonafide political purposes. Use for commercial solicitation or other business purposes is prohibited.

#### **4) Are there restrictions regarding pre-filling info on registration forms?**

It depends on the jurisdiction (see Questions #2). In most case, there are no restrictions to pre-filling information on the form as long as they form has not been signed. The affidavit of registration (the signature) must always be executed in the presence of a registration officer. The only exception is for qualified citizens absent from the county due to business or outside the territorial limits of the US during the registration period who are then allowed to register by mail.

## **COMPLETING VOTER REGISTRATION FORMS**

#### **5) How long must you live in a county before you are eligible to register to vote?**

A person must have been a “permanent resident” of the jurisdiction in which the person intends to register for a minimum of thirty (30) days prior to a primary or general election. Permanent residency is defined in Question #6.

#### **6) Are there any restrictions on registering to vote using a P.O. Box, college campus, or dorm address?**

A person may register to vote using any address he or she considers to be his or her permanent residence. A permanent abode is necessary to constitute a residence within the meaning of Section 3-1. A permanent abode, in the sense of the statute, means nothing more than a domicile, a home, which the party is at liberty to leave as interest or whim may dictate, but without any present intention to change it. No elector or spouse shall be deemed to have lost his or her residence in any precinct or election district in this State by reason of his or her absence on business of the United States, or of this State. Nothing in this Section shall be construed to prevent homeless individuals from registering to vote under the provisions of this Act. You may register using a P.O. Box address as long as you have also provided a permanent address. There is an exception for college students who are allowed to their campus or dorm address to vote (see below).

#### **7) If I enter or leave the state because of work or school, can I still register to vote?**

A person may only vote using an address that they consider to be their permanent abode (see Question # 6). However, citizens of Illinois who are otherwise eligible to register may register to vote, even though they do not reside in traditional homes, if they can establish the existence of a "home base" within the election district and designate a mailing address at which they can be reached. According to officials at the Office of the Secretary of State, college students that who are in Illinois during registration of voters have the right to register and vote in Illinois elections.

In 2006 Illinois enacted the College Students Voter Registration Act, in which institutions of higher education are required to post voter registration forms on their websites and specifically ask students if they wish to register to vote “in any mailing of student registration materials to an address located in Illinois”, and to provide sufficient deputy registrars to fulfill this purpose.

#### **8) Are there any I.D. requirements to register to vote?**

Yes. If a voter registers in person, they must bring two forms of identification, including at least one demonstrating the current residence address. Acceptable forms of identification include, but are not limited to:

- driver's license;
- social security card;
- public aid identification card;
- utility bill;
- employee or student identification card;
- credit card;
- civic, union, or professional association membership card

If you do not have a driver's license or social security number, and the register form is submitted by mail, and you have never registered to vote in the jurisdiction you are now registering in, then you must send, with this application, either (i) a copy of a current and valid photo identification, or (ii) a copy of a current utility bill, bank statement, government check, paycheck, or other government document that shows the name and address of the voter. If you do not provide the information required above, then you will be required to provide election officials with either (i) or (ii) described above the first time you vote at a voting place or by absentee ballot.

### **9) Are there any I.D. requirements in order to vote?**

There are no I.D. requirements in order to vote unless you registered by mail after January 1, 2003, will be voting in the jurisdiction for the first time and did NOT submit required identification with your registration form. In that case you will be required to submit a copy of one of the following:

- Current valid photo valid identification, w/ an address matching the registration address
- A utility bill
- Paycheck
- Bank statement
- Government check
- Government document

### **10) What are the rules regarding missing or illegible information on registration forms?**

The only rule governing the disposition of registration applications states that a registration application will be processed if it is "sufficient on its face to cause the applicant to be listed among the voters of this jurisdiction." Applications that do not meet this standard will be rejected. Applications that are missing crucial identifying information are not likely to be processed, while others that are missing information such as gender may be accepted.

### **11) If a person changes their name, can they have their new name reflected on their voter registration records by filling out a voter registration form?**

Yes. Any registered voter who changes her/his name by marriage or otherwise must re-register. A registered voter who changed his/her name 27 days or less before the election may, if otherwise qualified, vote after completing an affidavit. A person who changed her/his name and did not re-register, but still lives in the same precinct, may vote after completing an affidavit at the polling place regardless of when the name change occurred.

## **REGISTERING OTHERS TO VOTE**

### **12) What are the laws regarding third party registration?**

Third-party voter registration groups, before engaging in registration activity, must become certified as "bona fide" registration group and have its members become deputy registrars. Applications for certification must be received ninety or more days before the election, and will be processed within seven days. Applications must state that the organization has an interest in registering voters and desires to certify its members as deputy registrars, must describe how the organization is qualified to perform this task, must include a copy of the organization's charter or other foundational documents, and must list the addresses and telephone numbers of all the organization's offices within the state and all the organization's principal officers (including information regarding parent organizations, if any).

To qualify as a bona fide registration group, the group must meet the following requirements:

1. The organization's articles of incorporation or other foundational documents must state that one of the purposes of the organization is to increase participation in government;
2. The organization must conduct its activities primarily within Illinois;
3. The organization must be a not-for-profit organization;
4. The organization must maintain an office and telephone number in Illinois;

If the organization files a proper application and meets all of these requirements, the State Board of Elections shall certify the organization. If the State rejects the application, it will notify the organization in writing and state the reasons for rejection. Notified organizations may dispute the determination by requesting and attending a hearing before the Board of Elections at which the organization may present and be asked to present evidence on the issue. Id. The Board may suspend an organization's certification upon determining the organization no longer satisfies the above requirements, in which case the organization will receive written notice and may request a hearing in front of the Board.

When third-parties submit applications on behalf of others they should submit the applications together with a form called the Voter Registration Application Transmittal. If third parties submit applications without the Transmittal, the individuals can still be registered, but are treated as mail-in rather than in-person registrations.

### **13) Are there any laws regarding submission of voter registration forms by individuals receiving compensation?**

No, as long as the voter registration organization is a non-profit there does not appear to be a restriction on paying individuals working for the non-profit. There is however a penalty for paying a voter to register. "A person may not pay, offer to pay, or accept payment...for registering a person to vote." This is a class four felony.

### **14) Is training or registration with state required for registration drives?**

Yes. The state of Illinois runs a "deputy registrar" program for anyone wishing to register voters. Deputy registers must attend a one-hour training session, be sponsored by an organization certified by the State Board of Elections, and take an oath. To qualify they must also be registered Illinois voters. Since a recent change in state law, those deputized as registrars are no longer limited to registering those within their county and register voters across the state. For more information see [http://www.voterinfonet.com/sub/deputy\\_registrar.asp](http://www.voterinfonet.com/sub/deputy_registrar.asp).

### **15) Are volunteers or staff of voter registration drives required to be county or state residents?**

All deputy registrars must be registered voters in the jurisdiction of the appointing election authority. However, virtually all appointed deputy registrars (excluding only the Directors of Healthcare and Family Services and the Illinois Department of Employment Security, or employees that they appoint) may now accept the registration of any qualified resident of the State of Illinois. Completed registration materials returned for those persons residing outside of the election authority or deputy registrar's specific county shall be transmitted by that election authority within 2 days to the election authority of the person's election jurisdiction.

## **REGISTRATION DEADLINES**

### **16) What is the deadline to register to vote?**

Voters must register on or before the 28<sup>th</sup> day before the election. If the ballot is being mailed it must be post-marked prior to the close of registration. An absentee voter may register by mail at the same time that they request a ballot. Grace period registration allows a person to register up to the 14<sup>th</sup> day before the election. There is a separate deadline for military voters, who are allowed to vote without registering on Election Day.

### **17) Must organizations or individuals engaged in voter registration drives submit their forms within a certain period of time?**

Completed registration forms must be returned within seven days of completion up to the 35<sup>th</sup> day before the election. Between the 35<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> day, completed registrations must be returned within 48 hours of completion. On the 28<sup>th</sup> day before the election, completed registrations must be returned within 24 hours (as no registrations are accepted less than 27 days before the election).

### **18) Election Day registration?**

Election day registration is not allowed but military voters are allowed to vote without registering on election day. They must produce satisfactory evidence that they were employed by the military in the past 60 days shall be allowed to vote without registration. However, to fit into this exception, the military voter must execute an affidavit stating that he or she is qualified to vote and did not have time to register due to military service. The affidavit must be accompanied by the affidavit of another voter who swears the military voter is qualified to vote.

### **19) Does state election law allow for early voting?**

Yes, Illinois allows for early voting through both absentee ballots and in-person early voting.

Voters seeking to vote absentee must assert one of the following reasons: They expect to be absent from their counties of residence on Election Day; they will serve as election judges in a precinct other than the one in which they live; they are physically unable to get to the polls; they are observing a religious holiday or religious principles prevent them from going to the polls; they cannot get to the polls due to their duties working for one of the various government offices that conduct elections; they have jury duty; they are students who are away from their homes due to school; they are prisoners awaiting trial; they are government employees who used to live in the jurisdiction but had to move due to their employment.

Illinois allows voters to vote early without providing any reason. Early voting can occur starting the twenty- second day before the election up to and including the fifth day before the election.

## **VOTER REGISTRATION LEGISLATION**

**20) Is there any pending legislation? If so, where is it in the legislative process?**

There is no pending legislation regarding voter registration or eligibility.

**21) Applicable statutes?**

Illinois Election Code: 10 ILCS 5

State Administrative Code: Title 26, Chapter 1, Section 216 (Registration of Voters)

**21) Is there an elections official contact who is helpful?**

For more information, contact the:

Steve Sturm, Attorney  
State Board of Elections  
1020 S. Spring St.  
Springfield, IL 62704  
1-(217)-782-4141

Illinois State Board of Elections Complaint hotline: 1-866-513-1121

**22) What web resources are available?**

State Board of Elections: [www.elections.il.gov](http://www.elections.il.gov)

Downloadable guide for the Deputy Registrar's Program:

<http://www.elections.il.gov/Downloads/ElectionInformation/PDF/DRGuide.pdf>

Illinois Voter Registration Pamphlet:

<http://www.elections.il.gov/Downloads/ElectionInformation/PDF/registervote.pdf>

Election Law at Moritz, from Ohio State University, 50 questions on Election law for Illinois:

[http://moritzlaw.osu.edu/electionlaw/election06/50-5\\_Illinois.php#18](http://moritzlaw.osu.edu/electionlaw/election06/50-5_Illinois.php#18)

National Campaign for Fair Elections: <http://www.nationalcampaignforfairelections.org/illinois>