

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

This guide is designed for informational purposes only. It is not legal advice and is not intended to create an attorney-client relationship. The Election Protection Coalition does not warrant any information contained in this guide, nor does the Coalition suggest that the information in this guide should be used as a basis to pursue legal advice or decision making.

VOTER REGISTRATION FORMS**Where to obtain voter registration forms.**

There are several ways to obtain voter registration forms. Forms may be obtained through the mail by calling the Secretary of States office at 617-727-2828 or 1-800-462-VOTE. Alternatively, forms may be downloaded and printed out at <http://www.state.ma.us/sec/ele/elestu/stuidx.htm>. Completed voter registration forms should be mailed to the voter's local city or town hall. Massachusetts also provides for voter registration at all City Halls and the Department of Motor Vehicles.

Once the registration has been mailed, the voter should receive a confirmation of receipt within two to three weeks. If confirmation is not received, the voter should contact their local city or town hall to ensure that registration has been completed.

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

According to the Office of the Secretary of State, photocopies of the state voter registration form will not be accepted. Photocopies of the National Voter Registration Form are acceptable, provided that the voter's signature is original.

While the Massachusetts Election Code does not address the issue of allowing voter registration applications to be copied after their completion and kept as records, the Secretary of State's office confirmed that the Commonwealth does allow the copying and storing of registration records.

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

No. Massachusetts complies with the National Voter Registration Act and accepts the National Voter Registration Form.

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

Massachusetts code provides that while voter information is to be collected and maintained for all registered voters in the Commonwealth, it is not available for public use. Voter registration information is only available to candidates running for a state-wide office, state party officials, state ballot question committees, the adjudicate general, and other offices deemed appropriate by the Secretary of State.

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

No. According to the Office of the Secretary of State there are no restrictions of this kind.

COMPLETING VOTER REGISTRATION FORMS

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

Massachusetts only requires that a person claiming the right to vote is a citizen of the county in which they register. See question 16. There are no waiting periods for registration.

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

According to the Office of the Secretary of State, Massachusetts complies with federal law allowing for registration using a college campus or dorm address. However, anyone using a P.O. Box as a mailing address must also list a physical address and description.

7) If I enter or leave the state for work or school, can I register to vote?

Full-time college students, whether claiming in-state or out-of-state residency status for other purposes, may register to vote in the district they attend school. Those leaving the state but claiming legal residence in Massachusetts may vote absentee.

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

Yes. When mailing in their voter registration, voters should include a copy of their driver's license, state issued identification card, utility bill, bank statement, government check, or government paycheck. If identification is not included with the registration materials, the voter will be asked to present their identification prior to casting a ballot.

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

Unless identification was included when the voter mailed in their registration, a voter registered on or after January 1, 2003 who has not yet voted in a federal election will be required to show ID. Appropriate identification includes a driver's license, state issued identification card, utility bill, bank statement, government check, or government paycheck. Voters who do not have identification will be only be allowed to cast a provisional ballot.

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

If the registrar, after examining the registration, believes that the information included on the information is false or that the applicant is not eligible to vote under Massachusetts law, they may notify the applicant and reject the registration. The applicant may then, within a reasonable amount of time, remedy the defects and resubmit the registration.

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?

A registered voter may change the name they are registered under by filing a new registration with the name change order from the court attached. Unless the change is personally filed with the registrar, however, the name change will not take effect until June first of the following year.

REGISTERING OTHERS TO VOTE

12) What are the laws regarding third party registration?

According to the Secretary of State, Massachusetts law provides that third parties may assist in voter registration.

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

According to the Secretary of State, while third parties may be compensated for voter registration, the compensation received by third parties may not be calculated on a per-voter basis. Furthermore, no free items may be given to applicants to induce them to register.

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

No.

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

No.

REGISTRATION DEADLINES

16) What is the deadline to register to vote?

Registration will close twenty days prior to a federal or state election day and ten days prior to a town hall meeting. For the 2008 Presidential election, registration will close on Wednesday, October 15th 2008.

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

Registration forms must be submitted to the Board of Registrars within five calendar days of their completion. Penalties for late registration are at the discretion of the local registrar.

18) Election Day registration?

Massachusetts law does not allow for Election Day registration.

19) Does state election law allow for early voting?

Voters may vote early in person or by mail up to a day before a federal or state election. In order to be eligible, a voter must be employed outside the district where they are registered, out of town on the day of the election, enrolled in college or university outside of their registered district, have a disability that restricts their access to polling places, or a religious observance that prevents them from voting on election day.

Absentee ballot applications must include the voter's name, address as registered, ward and precinct, address where the voter wants the ballot sent, and the voter's signature. The application must be received by the registrar by noon on the day preceding the election.

After receiving the ballot, the voter must mark the ballot, sign the included affidavit, and return the ballot to the registrar in the designated envelope. The voter may also, by request, fill out and turn in the absentee ballot at the registrar's office.

VOTER REGISTRATION LEGISLATION

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

No

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

The Office of the Massachusetts Secretary of State is available to take questions from voters at (617) 727-2828 during office hours. The Secretary of State also maintains a voter registration guide at www.sec.state.ma.us.

22) What web resources are available?

<http://www.sec.state.ma.us>

<http://www.mass.gov/legis/laws/mgl/mgllink.htm>

(searchable database of MA laws)

National Campaign for Fair Elections:

<http://www.nationalcampaignforfairelections.org/massachusetts>