

**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****1) Where can voter registration forms be obtained?**

There are several ways to get a voter registration form. The form can be downloaded from the Secretary of State website at <http://www.sos.state.ms.us/elections/VoterRegistration>. Application forms also are available at the local county voting registrar. You may also register to vote when applying for or renewing your driver's license or when applying for services at numerous state and federal government agencies.

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

Photocopies of the Mississippi Voter Registration Application are accepted, provided that the signature on the application is original. The Mississippi Voter Registration Application should only be on a form or forms prescribed by the Secretary of State.

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

The National Voter Registration Form can be used in Mississippi. See <http://www.eac.gov/voter/Register%20to%20Vote>. Voter registration drives using the National Voter Registration Form are subject to the same requirements described in Questions #12-15. If using the National Voter Registration Form in Mississippi, the political party affiliation and race/ethnicity fields may be left blank.

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

Yes. Social security numbers, telephone numbers and date of birth and age information are exempt from inspection, examination, copying or reproduction under the Mississippi Public Records Act of 1983. Copies of voter registration files excluding such information will be provided to any person who requests at a cost not to exceed the actual cost of production.

**5) Are there restrictions regarding pre-filling information on registration forms?**

No. However, inconsistent information on registration forms, such as an incorrect county or zip code, may delay the registration process. See **Question #11**.

## **COMPLETING VOTER REGISTRATION FORMS**

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

A person must have been a resident of the Mississippi county or city in which the person intends to register for a minimum of thirty (30) days prior to a primary or general election.

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

A person may register using a college campus or dorm address so long as it is his or her physical home address. The Mississippi Code does not provide guidance on determining a person's physical home address. The Mississippi Voter Registration Application requires that a person list his or her physical home address in addition to his or her mailing address, therefore registering using only a P.O. Box is not possible.

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

Use of a college or work address is permissible provided that you have been a resident of Mississippi for at least thirty (30) days. If a person who registers to vote in Mississippi has previously registered to vote in another county or state, the Statewide Elections Management System will provide notice to such county or state if possible.

### **9) Are there any identification requirements to register to vote?**

The Mississippi Voter Registration Application requires the applicant to give either a Mississippi driver's license number or the last four digits of his or her social security number. If a person does not have a driver's license or social security number, submits an application by mail and has never registered to vote in the county where he or she seeks to register, that person must send a copy of a current utility bill, bank statement, government check, paycheck or any other government document showing the name and address of the applicant. If the applicant does not provide such documentation, he or she may be required to provide it when voting for the first time (see **Question 10**). Naturalized citizens must provide a certified copy of the final order or decree of naturalization at the time of registration.

### **10) Are there any identification requirements in order to vote?**

A voter whose driver's license number or the last four digits of his or her social security number has not been verified and who has not submitted a copy of valid identification (see **Question 9**) may be asked to provide identification at the polls.

[www.sos.state.ms.us/elections/2008/PDF/MS%20POLL%20MANAGER%20GUIDE-NON%20tsx%202008%20Final.pdf](http://www.sos.state.ms.us/elections/2008/PDF/MS%20POLL%20MANAGER%20GUIDE-NON%20tsx%202008%20Final.pdf)

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

A mail-in application will be rejected if in the opinion of the registrar missing or illegible information makes it impossible to determine whether or not the applicant is eligible to register to vote.

### **12) Can a person whose name has changed since registering vote on Election Day?**

Yes. A person already registered to vote under a name that has been legally changed since originally registering may have the name changed in the Statewide Elections Management System by filling out a new Voter Registration Application.

## **REGISTERING OTHERS TO VOTE**

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

The Secretary of State is required to send bulk quantities of mail-in Voter Registration Applications to any person or organization who requests them. There are no other provisions in the Mississippi Election Code restricting or otherwise regulating third-party registration.

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

No. There are no express provisions of the Mississippi Election Code prohibiting the submission of voter registration forms by individuals receiving compensation.

### **15) Is training required for voter registration drives?**

No. There is no express training requirement under the Mississippi Election Code.

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

No, they are not.

## **REGISTRATION DEADLINES**

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

For the 2008 general election, the deadline is Friday October 3, 2008. All applications to vote must be submitted or postmarked no later than the 30th day before the date of the first election in which the individual intends to vote.

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

No, there are no provisions in the Mississippi Election Code restricting or otherwise regulating third-party registration deadlines. The registration deadline is 30 days before a general election. All applications to vote must be submitted or postmarked no later than the 30th day before the date of the first election in which the individual intends to vote.

### **19) Is Election Day registration allowed?**

Individuals who register to vote on Election Day will not be permitted to vote in that election. For the registration deadline see **Question 17**.

### **20) Does state election law allow for early or absentee voting?**

Early voting is not permitted in Mississippi, however, absentee voting is permitted.

A citizen of Mississippi who is eligible to vote may vote by absentee ballot only if they fall under one of the following enumerated categories:

- (1) Any member of the United States Army, Navy, Air Force or Marines;
- (2) Any member of the Merchant Marine or American Red Cross;
- (3) Any disabled war veteran who is a patient in any hospital;
- (4) Any civilian attached to and serving outside of the United States with any branch of the Armed Forces, the Merchant Marine or the American Red Cross;
- (5) Any person temporarily residing outside of the territorial limits of the United States;
- (6) Any Person enrolled as a student at a United States Military Academy;
- (7) The spouse and dependents of any person described in (1) through (6) above;
- (8) Any person who is a bona fide student, teacher or administrator at any college, university, junior college, high or junior high school or elementary school whose studies or employment necessitates his or her absence from the county on the date of the election;
- (9) Any person who is required to be away from his or her place of residence on election day due to employment with the Mississippi congressional delegation and the spouse and dependents of such person if they will also be away on election day;
- (10) Any person who will be away from his or her county of residence on election day for any reason;
- (11) Any person who has a temporary or permanent physical disability and who, because of such disability, is unable to vote in person without substantial hardship to him or herself or others, or whose attendance at the polling place could cause danger to him or herself or others;
- (12) The parent, spouse or dependent of a person who is hospitalized more than fifty (50) miles from his or her residence;
- (13) Any person who is sixty-five (65) years of age or older;
- (14) Any member of the Mississippi congressional delegation absent from Mississippi on election day and his or her spouse and dependents; and
- (15) Any person required to work on election day during the times at which the polls will be open.

Applications for absentee ballots must be available at the Circuit or Municipal Clerk in each county at least sixty (60) days prior to each election. Each Circuit or Municipal Clerk maintains a list of individuals who request absentee ballots by submitting an application. Prior to distribution of the actual ballots, the Commissioner of Elections checks each county's list to ensure that only eligible voters receive ballots. Absentee ballots are distributed to eligible voters no later than forty (40) days prior to each election. Voters who wish to vote by absentee ballot should contact the Circuit or Municipal Clerk in their county at least two weeks prior to any election.

## **VOTER REGISTRATION LEGISLATION**

### **21) Is there any pending legislation that affects voter registration? If so, where is it in the legislative process?**

House Bill 969, which passed the Mississippi House but died in Committee in the Senate, would disenfranchise a person convicted of any felony of Mississippi, another state or the United States after July 1, 2008. Currently only those persons convicted of the crimes of murder, rape, bribery, theft, arson, obtaining money or goods under false pretenses, perjury, forgery, embezzlement or bigamy are prohibited from voting. The bill does, however, provide that anyone disenfranchised for their first

felony conviction (other than those convicted of murder or rape) may regain the right to vote after a period which ends two years after such person fully completes any terms and conditions of his or her sentence. This is a change from current law, under which anyone convicted of the crimes listed above is permanently disenfranchised.

**22) What applicable statutes are possibly affected?**

Miss. Code § 23-15-11. Qualifications, generally. This section sets forth the basic voter eligibility requirements in Mississippi.

Miss. Code § 23-15-19. Persons convicted of certain crimes not to be registered. This section currently provides for disenfranchisement of persons convicted of certain enumerated crimes.

**23) Are there any helpful elections official contacts?**

For more information, contact the Mississippi Secretary of State at:

Linda Dixon Rigsby  
Assistant Secretary of State for Elections  
P. O. Box 136  
Jackson, MS 39205-0136  
Elections Hotline: 800-829-6786  
Elections Call center: 601-576-2550 Fax: 601-359-5019

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

The Mississippi Secretary of State has a website dedicated to providing information on elections and the voter registration process: <http://www.sos.state.ms.us/elections/elections.asp>. This site includes resources such as frequently asked questions, absentee ballots, and the dates of upcoming elections.

The National Campaign for Fair Elections is another resource:  
<http://www.nationalcampaignforfairelections.com/pages/mississippi>.