



National Campaign For  
**FAIR ELECTIONS**  
[www.nationalcampaignforfairelections.org](http://www.nationalcampaignforfairelections.org)

## Ensuring a Valid Voter Registration in MISSOURI: Frequently Asked Questions

### VOTER REGISTRATION FORMS

There are several ways to get a voter registration form. Individuals may apply to register to vote at a County Voter Registration Office; a county-by-county listing is available here: <http://sos.mo.gov/elections/countyclerks.asp>. Voters may also register at any office of the Department of Motor Vehicles or the [Department of Transportation](#) photo license center when he/she obtains or updates his/her driver's license. Any state agency providing a service to the public also have voter registration forms. You may also request registration forms online at the Secretary of State's website: <https://www.sos.mo.gov/firstvote/students/request.asp>. Voters in St. Louis County can download the Missouri and National voter registration forms from the County at the following website, which provides the appropriate address for registration forms: [http://www.stlouisco.com/elections/VOTER\\_REG\\_APP.pdf](http://www.stlouisco.com/elections/VOTER_REG_APP.pdf).

#### **1) Are there restrictions on copying voter registration forms?**

No. Missouri law does not outline any restrictions on copying forms, but voters may *not* submit photocopied applications.

Because Missouri requires voter registration forms to be a certain format and printed on a thicker type of paper than that used by regular printers, voter registration form cannot be printed from the internet.

#### **2) Are there any restrictions on using the National Voter Registration Form?**

No. Either the National Form or the Missouri voter registration form may be used to vote in all elections. See [http://www.eac.gov/register\\_vote\\_faq.asp](http://www.eac.gov/register_vote_faq.asp). National Forms that are printed on regular paper, signed by the applicant, and mailed in an envelope with first class postage are accepted.

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

No. Missouri law does not prohibit copying completed registration forms prior to submission to the board.

The election authority may place all information on any registration cards in computerized form. The database maintained will have the voter's name, date of birth, address, and district for various elections. Lists of this information may be sold for a fee, but not distributed through the internet. V.A.M.S. § 115.157.

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

No. You can pre-fill information in a voter registration form, but be sure your handwriting is legible.

### COMPLETING VOTER REGISTRATION FORMS

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

Missouri does not have a residency requirement. New voters must be registered by the voter registration deadline.

#### **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 she considers to be her residence. A residence is any place where a person lives with the intent of staying. A college or dorm address may be used if the applicant lives at that address, and when they leave—for any length of time—have the intention of returning. A post office box is not a residence.

Students with a campus P.O. Box should fill in their dorm name and room number in the Address Where You Live box (5) on the Missouri form or the Home Address box (2) on the National form and then enter their P.O. Box number in the Address Where You Get Your Mail box (6) on the Missouri form or (3) on the National form.

#### **7) Can a person register to vote at a location that is not their permanent address (i.e. college)?**

Yes. A person's voting address is determined based on their residence. A residence is any place where a person lives with the intent of staying. A person can reside at an address and leave for a period of time, e.g. to attend college. However, as long as the person has the intention of returning, that address may be considered their residence.

Students who want to vote are protected by the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution. This means that they cannot be treated differently than any other citizen when it comes to voting. Specifically, students should neither be forced to fill out additional information that non-students do not have to fill out nor can election officials require students fulfill additional obligations that non-students do not have to satisfy. Of course, no one can register and vote in two places but if a student considers her dorm or her address at school her residence, she can register to vote there; if she feels that the address where her parents live or the address she lived before going to school is her residence, she can register to vote there and vote by absentee ballot.

A person is eligible to register and vote in the county they consider their residence. If a person is away from their residence, they may vote by absentee ballot.

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

Individuals registering in person with an election authority or a deputy registration official will be asked for identification at the time of registration and must present a copy of a birth certificate, a

Native American tribal document, other proof of United States citizenship, a valid Missouri driver's license, or other form of personal identification at the time of registration. V.A.M.S. § 115.135.2. Identification is not required when registering by mail or in person with a third party group.

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

Yes. Missouri recently passed a law requiring photo identification for all voters when voting at the polls.

Voters must present one of the following at the polls:

1. A non-expired Missouri driver's license showing the name and a photograph or digital image of the individual; or
2. A non-expired Missouri non-driver's license showing the name and a photographic or digital image of the individual; or
3. A document that satisfies all of the following requirements:
  - (a) The document contains the name of the individual to whom the document was issued, and the name substantially conforms to the most recent signature in the individual's voter registration record;
  - (b) The document shows a photographic or digital image of the individual;
  - (c) The document includes an expiration date, and the document is not expired, or if expired, expired not before the date of the most recent general election; and
  - (d) The document was issued by the United States or the state of Missouri; or
4. Any identification containing a photographic or digital image of the individual which is issued by the Missouri National Guard, the United States armed forces, or the United States Department of Veteran Affairs to a member or former member of the Missouri National Guard or the United States armed forces and that does not have an expiration date. V.A.M.S. § 115.427.1.

There are exemptions for those with mental or physical disabilities, those born on or before January 1, 1941, and those with a religious belief against photographic identification. These people can vote provisional ballots, provided they sign affidavits affirming the reason for their failure to provide any of the identification listed above. V.A.M.S. § 115.427.2.

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

Within seven days of receiving a voter's registration form, the county election authority will send the voter a verification notice, letting the voter know if he or she is registered to vote. V.A.M.S. § 115.155. As long as the form was submitted before the registration deadline, the voter may correct missing or illegible information on his or her form.

If any person applying to register in person is unable to write, the election official will fill in the registration cards, and the applicant can sign by mark, witnessed by the election official. The election official will note the applicant's height in feet and inches, weight, color of eyes and other distinguishing features under the title "Remarks" on the registration cards. V.A.M.S. § 115.161.

If the election authority learns on Election Day that a registration record has been placed in the wrong precinct register, the election authority will immediately have the error corrected.

V.A.M.S. § 115.171.

### **11) Can a person register to change their name by filling out a voter registration form?**

No. Proof of a name change must be presented *in person* to the election authority. If a registered voter obtains a lawful name change, including a change because of marriage, the voter must tell the election authority. Then the election authority will enter the change on the voter's registration cards. After filling in the voter's new name and transferring other necessary information from the voter's previous registration cards to a new set of cards, the election authority may send new cards to the voter for signature or may require the voter to sign new cards at the polls. If the election authority does require the voter to sign new cards, the new cards will then become the voter's official registration cards.

A registered voter who obtains a lawful name change may, after notifying the election judges of the name change, vote in *one* election under the previous name. The election judges will notify the election authority of the voter's name change and the election authority will enter the change on the voter's registration cards as provided for in this section. V.A.M.S. § 115.167.

## REGISTERING OTHERS TO VOTE

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

Anyone who accepts a voter registration application from another person and agrees or offers to submit the application to the election authority for the voter must deliver the application to the election authority **WITHIN SEVEN DAYS OF ACCEPTING OR RECEIVING THE APPLICATION**. This is applicable to anyone receiving compensation or supervising others who are receiving compensation.

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

Yes. **IT IS ILLEGAL TO PAY PEOPLE DOING VOTER REGISTRATION DRIVES ON A PER APPLICATION BASIS**, i.e., \$1 for every voter registration form submitted. No one registering voters can be paid based on the number of voters registered, registration applications collected, or registration applications submitted to election officials. V.A.M.S. § 115.203.

Missouri's new law also requires that people who are paid to solicit more than ten voter registration applications must register with the state. V.A.M.S. § 115.205.1.

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

No training is required, but registration is required. The Secretary of State has a statewide form for those wishing to conduct registration drives. It is attached to this manual and will soon be available online. Registration requires signing an oath and affirmation, and providing the following information:

1. The name of the voter registration solicitor (the person wishing to conduct the voter registration drive);
2. His/her residential address, including street number, city, state, and zip code;
3. His/her mailing address, if different from the residential address;
4. Whether the voter registration solicitor expects to be paid for soliciting voter registrations;

5. If the voter registration solicitor expects to be paid, the identity of the payor (employer); and
6. The signature of the voter registration solicitor. V.A.M.S. § 115.205.2.

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

Yes. A voter registration solicitor must be at least eighteen years of age and must be a registered voter in the state of Missouri. V.A.M.S. § 115.205.1.

**REGISTRATION DEADLINES**

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

The voter registration deadline is October 11, 2006 for the November 7, 2006 elections. A person must be registered to vote in the jurisdiction in which that person is a resident. The voter must register no later than 5:00 p.m., or the normal closing time of any public building where the registration is being held if that building is open later, on the fourth Wednesday before the election. The only exception to this deadline is if the voter is an interstate former resident, an intrastate new resident, or a new resident – these voters may vote absentee (see below). V.A.M.S. § 115.135.

- An *interstate former resident* is a former resident and registered voter in Missouri who moves from Missouri to another state after the deadline to register to vote in any presidential election in the new state and who otherwise possesses the qualifications to register and vote in that state. V.A.M.S. § 115.275. These people can vote by absentee ballot for presidential and vice presidential elections. V.A.M.S. § 115.277.
- An *intrastate new resident* is a registered voter of Missouri who moves from one election authority's jurisdiction in the state to another election authority's jurisdiction in the state after the last day on which they could register to vote in an election and otherwise possesses the qualifications to vote. V.A.M.S. § 115.275. These people can vote by absentee ballot at the elections for president and vice president, United States senator, representative in Congress, statewide elected officials and statewide questions, propositions, and amendments from their new jurisdiction of residence after they have registered to vote in their new jurisdiction of residence. V.A.M.S. § 115.277.
- A *new resident* is a person who moves to Missouri after the last date on which they could register to vote in any presidential election. V.A.M.S. § 115.275. These people can vote by absentee ballot for presidential and vice presidential electors after registering to vote in their new jurisdiction of residence. V.A.M.S. § 115.277.

**17) What (if different from voter registration deadline) is the registration form submission deadline?**

The registration submission deadline is also October 11, 2006. See V.A.M.S. § 115.135.

## 18) Election Day registration?

Election Day registration is not an option in Missouri. Individuals who register to vote on Election Day will not be able to vote in that election.

## 19) Does Missouri election law allow for early voting?

No. Currently, Missouri election law does not allow for early voting. See V.A.M.S. § 115.126, repealed by S.B. 730 (2006). However, a voter may vote absentee for any of the following reasons:

1. Absence on election day from the jurisdiction of the election authority in which such voter is registered to vote;
2. Incapacity or confinement due to illness or physical disability—this includes a person who is primarily responsible for the physical care of a person who is incapacitated or confined due to illness or disability;
3. Religious belief or practice;
4. Being employed as an election authority, as a member of an election authority, or by an election authority at a location other than such voter's polling place;
5. Incarceration, provided all qualifications for voting are retained.

Voters may vote absentee by mail, fax (if available), or in person at the election authority where they are registered to vote (or would be registered to vote). An application must be in writing and must state the applicant's name, address at which he or she is or would be registered, his or her reason for voting an absentee ballot and the address to which the ballot is to be mailed, if mailing is requested. V.A.M.S. § 115.279. Absentee ballot applications must be sent to the proper local election authority, not the Secretary of State's office. If you have registered to vote by mail and are voting absentee the first time you vote, you are required to provide a copy of your identification with your absentee ballot request unless you provided a copy with your voter registration application.

An application to vote absentee in a primary election also has to state which ballot (political party) the applicant wants to receive. If any application fails to designate the ballot the voter wants, the election authority will, within three working days after receiving the application, notify the applicant by mail that it will be unable to deliver an absentee ballot until the applicant designates which political party ballot he or she wishes to receive. If the applicant does not respond to the request for political party designation, the election authority is authorized to provide the voter with whatever part of the ballot doesn't require a political party designation. V.A.M.S. § 115.279.

Any absentee ballot application must be received by the election authority by 5:00 p.m. on the Wednesday before an election, except for the three groups of voters described in Question 16. *New residents* and *intrastate new residents* have to submit their application in person at the election authority by 7:00 p.m. on the day of the election. *Interstate former residents* must submit their absentee ballot applications to the election authority where they were registered before by 5:00 p.m. on the Wednesday before the election, or they can submit it in person by 7:00 p.m. on Election Day. V.A.M.S. § 115.279.

No absentee ballot can be rejected if the voter fails to state on the ballot envelope their reason for voting an absentee ballot. V.A.M.S. § 115.294.

Any absentee voter who is registered to vote by mail and wants to cast an absentee ballot will also have to sign an affidavit (that they receive with the absentee ballot). V.A.M.S. § 159, 290, 291.

Only a blood relative or the person themselves can return an absentee ballot in person. V.A.M.S. § 115.291.

Voters can download absentee ballot request forms from the Secretary of State here:

<http://www.sos.mo.gov/forms/elections/absentee.pdf>

More information from the Secretary of State's office can be found here:

[http://www.sos.mo.gov/elections/s\\_default.asp?id=absentee](http://www.sos.mo.gov/elections/s_default.asp?id=absentee)

## VOTER REGISTRATION LEGISLATION

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

Missouri's new law, S.B. 1014 & 730, enacted changes to election administration, including identification at the polls. These new laws have been incorporated under the appropriate questions.

### **21) Applicable statutes?**

Various Missouri Statutes govern voter registration, but they are all contained within V.A.M.S. § 115.

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

For more information, contact the Secretary of State's Office at:

State Information Center  
P.O. Box 1767  
Jefferson City, MO 65102

Phone: (573) 751-2301  
Fax: (573) 526-3242

Email: [elections@sos.mo.gov](mailto:elections@sos.mo.gov)

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

The Missouri Secretary of State's website has relevant information regarding voter registration forms and elections: <http://sos.mo.gov/categories.asp?id=1>

National Campaign for Fair Elections:  
[www.nationalcampaignforfairelections.org/pages/missouri](http://www.nationalcampaignforfairelections.org/pages/missouri)