



Frequently Asked Questions

Illinois – General Election 2022

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Note: This FAQ is not exhaustive. Situations or inquiries may arise that are not answered below. In those circumstances, contact your hotline captain or command center for assistance. Please make sure to record all of the voter's contact information should follow-up be necessary.

REGISTERING TO
VOTE

ELECTION DAY

EARLY VOTE

VOTE BY MAIL

ABSENTEE

POLLING PLACE
ISSUES

ACCESSIBILITY
/ ASSISTANCE

QUESTIONS

Table of Contents

REGISTERING TO VOTE

1. **ELIGIBILITY:** Can I register to vote?
2. **PRIMARY ELECTION:** Can I vote in the primary election? Do I have to be a member of a party to vote in its primary?
3. **STATUS:** Am I registered to vote?
4. **HOW:** How do I register to vote? Can I register online? Do I need a printer? Can I register to vote in person?
5. **IDENTIFICATION:** What ID is required to register to vote?
6. **DEADLINES:** When is/was the voter registration deadline? Are there different deadlines whether I register by mail, in-person, online or on Election Day?
7. **SAME DAY:** Does my state have Same Day Registration? If so, what is the process?
8. **PERMANENT MOVE:** I have moved permanently and I didn't update my voter registration, can I vote?
9. **TEMPORARY MOVE:** I have moved temporarily. How can I vote?
10. **STUDENT:** I am a college student. Can I register to vote where I go to school? What if I am taking classes remotely? Where can I vote?
11. **LIVING ABROAD:** I am living abroad and/or serving in the military. How can I register and/or vote?

12. **CRIMINAL CONVICTION:** I have a criminal conviction. Can I register to vote?
13. **INCARCERATED:** I am currently incarcerated. Can I register to vote?

HOW TO VOTE: ELECTION DAY

14. **HOURS:** When do the polls open/close on Election Day?
15. **POLLING LOCATION:** Where do I vote on Election Day?
16. **CLOSING:** What if the polls close when I am already in line? ?
17. **IDENTIFICATION:** What identification is required to vote?
18. **NO IDENTIFICATION:** Can I vote without providing identification?
19. **NOT ON ROLLS AT MY POLLING PLACE:** I am at my polling place but am not showing up on the voter registration roll. Can I vote where I am?
20. **PROVISIONAL BALLOT:** If I don't have an ID, can I request a provisional ballot? My name is not on the rolls at my polling place, can I request a provisional ballot?

HOW TO VOTE: EARLY VOTING

21. **AVAILABILITY:** Is there early voting in my state (whether called early voting or in person absentee voting)?
22. **ELIGIBILITY:** Do I have to have a reason to vote early?
23. **WHEN:** When does early voting begin/end?
24. **WHERE:** Where do I vote during early voting?
25. **IDENTIFICATION:** What identification is required for early voting? What if I don't have an ID?

HOW TO VOTE: VOTE BY MAIL

26. **AUTOMATIC MAIL BALLOT:** Will I automatically be sent a ballot in the mail?
27. **ELIGIBILITY:** Do I need a specific reason to vote by mail?
28. **APPLICATION DEADLINE:** What is the deadline for requesting a mail-in ballot?
29. **APPLICATION RETURN:** How do I submit my mail-in ballot application? Can someone return it for me? Does it have to be postmarked by a specific date?
30. **IDENTIFICATION:** Are there identification requirements when I return my absentee ballot application and/or ballot?
31. **RECEIVING MAIL BALLOT:** Does the ballot have to be sent to my home, or can I have it sent somewhere else? What if I don't have a home address or my address is a PO Box?
32. **MISSED THE APPLICATION DEADLINE:** What if I have not requested a mail-in ballot by the deadline?
33. **STATUS OF APPLICATION AND/OR BALLOT:** How can I check the status of my application and/or ballot?
34. **APPLICATION OR BALLOT REJECTED:** I learned my mail-in ballot application and/or ballot was rejected. What can I do to fix any errors or get another one?
35. **COMPLETING BALLOT:** How do I complete the mail-in ballot?
36. **ASSISTANCE COMPLETING BALLOT:** Can someone assist me in filling out my ballot?
37. **DEADLINE TO RETURN BALLOT:** What is the deadline for the ballot to be received? Does it have to be postmarked by a specific date? Can I drop it off in person?
38. **BALLOT DROP OFF LOCATIONS:** What are the locations for dropping off a ballot (instead of mailing it)?
39. **ASSISTANCE DROPPING OFF BALLOT:** Can someone else drop off my completed ballot for me?
40. **LOST OR SPOILED BALLOT:** What if I lost my mail-in ballot, made a mistake on it (spoiled it), or I received an incorrect ballot?

41. **NON-RECEIPT OF BALLOT:** What if I requested a mail-in ballot but have not received it? What are my options for voting?
42. **IN PERSON OPTION:** What if I requested or received a mail-in ballot but I want to vote in person on Election Day?

HOW TO VOTE: ABSENTEE

43. **ELIGIBILITY:** Am I eligible to request an absentee ballot?
44. **APPLICATION DEADLINE:** What is the deadline for requesting an absentee ballot?
45. **IDENTIFICATION:** Are there any identification requirements?
46. **EMERGENCY:** Is there an emergency absentee ballot? If so, am I eligible?
47. **APPLICATION RETURN:** Where and how can I return my absentee ballot application? Can someone return it for me?
48. **STATUS OF APPLICATION AND/OR BALLOT:** How can I check the status of my absentee ballot application and/or absentee ballot return?
49. **APPLICATION OR BALLOT REJECTED:** I learned my absentee ballot application and/or ballot was rejected. How can I confirm this and what can I do to fix any errors or get another one?
50. **COMPLETING BALLOT:** How do I complete the absentee ballot?
51. **ASSISTANCE COMPLETING BALLOT:** Can someone assist me filling out the ballot?
52. **BALLOT DEADLINES:** What is the deadline for the ballot to be postmarked and/or received by, including dropping it off in person?
53. **BALLOT DROP OF LOCATIONS:** Where can I drop off a ballot (instead of mailing it)?
54. **ASSISTANCE DROPPING OFF:** Can someone else drop off my completed ballot for me?
55. **LOST OR SPOILED:** What if I lost my absentee ballot or it is spoiled or I received an incorrect one?
56. **NON-RECEIPT OF BALLOT:** What if I requested an absentee ballot but have not received it?
57. **IN PERSON OPTION:** What if I requested an absentee ballot but I want to vote in person on Election Day?
58. **IN PERSON ABSENTEE:** Where do I vote in-person absentee? When can I do this?

POLLING PLACE ISSUES

59. **POLLING PLACE NOT OPEN:** The polling place is not open. What should I do?
60. **LONG LINES:** There are long lines at the polling place. What should I do? What if the polls are closing while I'm in line?
61. **EQUIPMENT FAILURE:** What should I do if there are equipment problems at my precinct?
62. **EQUIPMENT ASSISTANCE:** I don't know how to use the voting equipment. Can I get help?
63. **PHYSICAL DISABILITY:** I have a physical disability and need assistance. Is my polling place ADA compliant? Does my voting location have an accessible voting system?
64. **READING/LANGUAGE ASSISTANCE:** I am blind, have a physical disability, or cannot read English and require assistance in order to vote. Can I get assistance at the polls?
65. **CAMPAIGNING:** What rules apply to people campaigning or "hanging around" my polling place? Can people approach me?
66. **CHALLENGE:** Someone is formally challenging my vote. What should I do?
67. **POLICE/MILITARY PRESENCE:** There are police/members of the military at the polling place. Is this okay? What should I do?
68. **THOUGHT WAS REGISTERED:** My name isn't on the voter registration roll but I thought I was registered. What should I do?
69. **PROVISIONAL BALLOT:** I have been offered a provisional ballot. What should I do?

ACCESSIBILITY/ASSISTANCE

70. **LANGUAGE ACCESS:** I am not an English speaker. What language resources are available? Can I bring someone in the booth to help me understand the ballot?
71. **CURBSIDE VOTING:** Is curbside voting available? How do I request it?
72. **VOTER GUIDE:** Can I bring a voting guide or reference notes with me into the voting booth?

QUESTIONS

73. **QUESTIONS:** [Who should I contact if I have questions about any of the above?](#)

REGISTERING TO VOTE

1. **ELIGIBILITY:** [Can I register to vote?](#)

To be eligible to vote in Illinois a voter must:

- be a United States Citizen.
- turn 18 on or before the date of the General or Consolidated Election.*
- live in Illinois at least 30 days prior to Election Day.¹
- not be serving a sentence of confinement in any penal institution as a result of a conviction.
- not claim the right to vote anywhere else.

*Note that if the election is a Primary Election, you must be 17 years old on or before the date of the Primary Election and turn 18 on or before the date of the General or Consolidated Election.

2. **PRIMARY ELECTION:** [Can I vote in the primary election? Do I have to be a member of a party to vote in its primary?](#)

Anyone registered to vote in Illinois can vote in a Primary Election. When a voter requests a ballot or shows up to the poll, they will indicate which party's ballot they wish to vote on. Illinois has an "Open Primary," which means that the voter is free to choose whichever party's ballot they wish to vote on, regardless of any stated or official affiliation to a political party or choices in previous elections. Once a Primary ballot is chosen, the voter can only vote on candidates in that party during that Primary Election. Choices made by the voter during one Primary will not limit a voter's future ability to choose a particular party's ballot or a particular candidate on a future ballot.

3. **STATUS:** [Am I registered to vote?](#)

A voter can determine whether they are registered to vote by checking the Illinois State Board of Elections' website (<https://ova.elections.il.gov/RegistrationLookup.aspx>).

¹ 10 ILCS 5/3-1.

Most local election jurisdictions also have their own voter registration lookup available online, which are sometimes more user friendly and up-to-date as compared to the state lookup tool. Examples include:

- Chicago residents: <https://chicagoelections.com/en/your-voter-information.html>
- Suburban Cook County residents: <https://www.cookcountyclerk.com/service/your-voter-information>
- Will County residents: <https://www.thewillcountyclerk.com/elections/voter-services/voter-lookup/>
- DuPage County residents: <https://www.dupageco.org/VoterLookup/>
- Kane County residents: <https://www.kanecountyclerk.org/Elections/Pages/Voter-Search.aspx>
- Kendall County residents: <http://kendall.il.electionconsole.com/voter-lookup.php>

If a voter is not yet registered, they can still register before or even on Election Day. Refer to [Question 4](#) (how to register), [6 \(voter registration deadlines\)](#), and [7 \(same day registration\)](#) for more details.

4. **HOW:** How do I register to vote? Can I register online? Do I need a printer? Can I register to vote in person?

A voter can register in person, through mail, or online.

- **In Person.** A voter may register in person at the County Clerk's Office, Board of Election Commissioner's Office, City and Villages Offices, Township Offices, Precinct Committeeman, schools, public libraries, military recruitment offices, and other locations designated by the election authority.² For information on identification required when in-person voting, see [Question 5](#).
- **By Mail.** A voter can register via mail by completing the Illinois Voter Registration Application (which can be downloaded at <https://www.elections.il.gov/ElectionOperations/VotingRegistrationForms.aspx>) and mailing it to the State Board of Elections or appropriate county clerk or board of election commissioners (i.e., if the voter lives in Springfield, the form would be mailed to the Sangamon County Clerk).³ See [Question 5](#) for details on identification that may be required with the mail-in application.
- **Online.** A voter can register online on the Illinois State Board of Elections' website (<https://ova.elections.il.gov/>) using an Illinois driver's license or state ID card and the last four digits of their social security number.⁴

For information on the different deadlines for each type of voter registration, see [Question 6](#).

5. **IDENTIFICATION:** What ID is required to register to vote?

The type of identification required to register to vote depends on how the voter is registering. Identification cannot be expired. Note that the Secretary of State's office has extended the deadline to renew expired driver's licenses, ID cards, and learner's permits to December 1, 2022.

- **In Person.** A voter can register to vote in person at locations designated by the local election authority, at certain public facilities, or (depending on location and availability) with trained deputy registrars. A voter can also register to vote at an Illinois Secretary of State driver's

²; See <https://www.elections.il.gov/Downloads/ElectionOperations/PDF/RegisteringToVote.pdf>.

³ 10 ILCS 5/1A-16(b).

⁴ 10 ILCS 5/1A-16.5.

services facilities when updating or getting a new driver's license or state ID card. Two forms of identification, with at least one showing the voter's current residence address, are needed when registering in-person. These forms of identification may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- driver's license,
 - social security card,
 - public aid identification card,
 - utility bill,
 - employee or student identification card,
 - lease or contract for a residence,
 - credit card, or
 - a civic, union or professional association membership card.⁵
 - For voters experiencing homelessness only, the identification verifying "current residence" must instead show evidence that they are able to receive mail at an address in the jurisdiction. This could be a piece of mail or a statement from someone else that authorizes the use of that mailing address.⁶
- **By Mail.** A voter registering by mail must provide proof of identity by submitting their driver's license number or social security number. If the voter does not have either of those and has never registered in the jurisdiction before, verification can be provided through the voter's driver's license number, State of Illinois ID card number, or the last four digits of the voter's social security card. If a voter does not submit this information or if the State cannot verify a voter's identification with what was submitted, the voter can provide identification either through mail or by bringing identification when they vote in-person. Sufficient identification includes:
 - a copy of a current and valid photo identification;
 - a copy of a current utility bill, bank statement, paycheck, government check, or other federal, state or local government document that shows the voter's name and address;⁷ or
 - an identification card issued by a college or university plus either (i) a copy of the voter's contract or lease for a residence or (ii) any postmarked mail delivered to the voter at their current address.⁸
- Note – if the voter is registering for the first time in a jurisdiction and is not able to send in the required identification information, then they will be required to vote in-person the first time.⁹ Voters voting under the provisions of UOCAVA (see [Question 11](#) for details) and the Voting Accessibility for the Elderly and Handicapped Act do not have to vote in person for the first time after having registered by mail.¹⁰*
- **Online.** A voter registering online must provide (i) their full Illinois driver's license or state identification card number, (ii) the last 4 digits of his or her social security number, and (iii) the

⁵ 10 ILCS 5/4-10; 10 ILCS 5/5-9; see

<https://www.elections.il.gov/Downloads/ElectionOperations/PDF/RegisteringToVote.pdf>.

⁶ 10 ILCS 5/4-10; 10 ILCS 5/5-9.

⁷ 10 ILCS 5/1A-16.

⁸ 10 ILCS 5/4-105; 10 ILCS 5/5-105; 10 ILCS 5/6-105.

⁹ 10 ILCS 5/4-105.

¹⁰ HAVA 303(b)(2)(c).

date the Illinois driver's license or state identification card was issued.¹¹ If the voter does not have a driver's license or State ID, they must register by mail or in person.

6. **DEADLINES:** [When is/was the voter registration deadline? Are there different deadlines whether I register by mail, in-person, online or on Election Day?](#)

- **In Person.** A voter may register in person up to 28 days before Election Day, which is a deadline of October 11 for the 2022 General Election. If voters miss the deadline, they may also register during grace period registration (for more information on grace period registration and Same Day Registration, see [Question 7](#)). A voter also may update their name or address while re-registering at any time before or even on Election Day.
- **By Mail.** If a voter is registering by mail, their application must be postmarked at least 28 days before the Election Date (October 11, 2022).¹² If voters miss the deadline, they may still register in-person during grace period registration (for more information on grace period registration and Same Day Registration, see [Question 7](#)).
- **Online.** If a voter is registering online, the registration deadline is 16 days before the Election Date (October 23, 2022).¹³ If voters miss the deadline, they may also register in-person during grace period registration (for more information on grace period registration and Same Day Registration, see [Question 7](#)).

7. **SAME DAY and GRACE PERIOD REGISTRATION:** [Does my state have Same Day Registration? If so, what is the process?](#)

Yes, voters can register with Grace Period Registration including on Election Day. Beginning 27 days before an election (October 12 onward) and through Election Day ("Grace Period Registration"), a voter may use Grace Period Registration to register to vote or update voter registration.¹⁴ A voter who registers to vote or changes their address during Grace Period Registration and wished to vote in the election occurring during Grace Period Registration must vote in person at the same time that they register or update their registration. During Grace Period Registration, voters may register and vote:

- at the office of the election authority
- at a permanent polling place established by the election authority
- at any other early voting site (such as temporary polling places) beginning 15 days prior to the Election Date
- at some polling places on Election Day¹⁵
- at a location specifically designated by the election authority.¹⁶

¹¹ 10 ILCS 5/1A-16.5.

¹² 10 ILCS 5/1A-16(b).

¹³ 10 ILCS 5/1A-16.5(l).

¹⁴ 10 ILCS 5/4-50; 10 ILCS 5/5-50; see

<https://www.elections.il.gov/DocDisplay.aspx?Doc=Downloads/ElectionOperations/PDF/GracePeriodReg.pdf> (download plain English version).

¹⁵ 10 ILCS 5/4-50

¹⁶ 10 ILCS 5/4-50; 10 ILCS 5/5-50; 10 ILCS 5/6-100.

Grace Period Registration locations and dates can be found at the State Board of Elections website (<https://www.elections.il.gov/VotingAndRegistrationSystems/EarlyVotingLocationsSearch.aspx>) but the local election authority might be a better source of information.

Election Day Registration (EDR) is provided for under Illinois law. In all counties, EDR is required to be available in at least one location within the county, and in counties with population over 100,000 (including Cook County) and counties with electronic poll books, EDR must be available in each polling place. Counties that include EDR in each polling place include Brown, Bureau, Champaign, Cook (Chicago and suburban Cook County), DeKalb, DuPage, Grundy, Kane, Kankakee, Kendall, Lake, Macon, Madison, McHenry, McLean, Peoria, Rock Island, Sangamon, Stark, St. Clair (East St. Louis and the remainder of St. Clair County), Tazewell, Will, and Winnebago Counties, as well as Cities such as Bloomington, Chicago, East St. Louis, and Rockford. Voters using EDR need to present two forms of ID, including one with a current address.¹⁷

For voters who live in a county with a population less than 100,000 that doesn't use electronic poll books AND that has decided not to allow Grace Period Registration at every polling place, the voter can access EDR at a location that might be different county by county. Depending on the county, the voter will be able to register at the county election office or at a polling place in each municipality where 20% of the county's residents reside if the election authority's main office is not located in that municipality.¹⁸

8. **PERMANENT MOVE:** [I have moved permanently and I didn't update my voter registration, can I vote?](#)

In general, Illinois requires voters to be a resident of the state starting at least 30 days prior to Election Day.¹⁹ If a voter moved into Illinois within the 30 days prior to the election, they are not eligible to vote in Illinois and should vote in the voter's previous state of residence until they have been in Illinois for 30 days.

Recent moves:

Voters that moved **within 27 days** of Election Day and **stayed in the same precinct** need only fill out an affidavit related to their address change, which will update their address for this and future elections.²⁰

Voters that moved **within 30 days** of Election day and **moved outside of their precinct** but still live in the State may update their registration to their new address through Election Day and do Grace Period Registration and voting based on their new address OR they can vote a full ballot in their old polling place after completing an affidavit. They must provide two forms of identification to update their address, with one showing the new address.²¹

In many jurisdictions (such as Chicago), if someone moved **within the last 30 days** and **stayed within the same jurisdiction**, voters may have the option of going to the old polling place and vote there.²² If this is

¹⁷ 10 ILCS 5/5-50.

¹⁸ 10 ILCS 5/4-50; *see also*

<https://www.elections.il.gov/DocDisplay.aspx?Doc=Downloads/ElectionOperations/PDF/GracePeriodReg.pdf> (download plain English version).

¹⁹ 10 ILCS 5/3-1.

²⁰ 10 ILCS 5/4-16.

²¹ 10 ILCS 5/3-1; 10 ILCS 5/17-10(b) (regarding the affidavit).

²² *See e.g.*, Chicago Board of Elections Frequently Asked Questions, *available at* <https://chicagoelections.gov/en/frequently-asked-questions.html>.

the case, the best source of information is the election authority itself or its published election judge manual for the particular election jurisdiction.

Moves more than 30 days before the election:

Voters that moved **more than 30 days before** the Election Date within the same election jurisdiction, but outside their precinct, and did not transfer their registration, may update their registration and vote through Election Day using Grace Period Registration; alternatively, they may vote for Federal offices only after completing an address correction form.

Voters that moved **more than 30 days before** the Election Date **to a new election jurisdiction** (a new county or a new municipality with its own board of election commissioners) and did not transfer their registration can only vote by re-registering from their new address.

Because of the availability of Grace Period Registration, only in rare cases should a voter be encouraged to utilize their old precinct (with a potentially different ballot) or be given a “Federal Offices only” ballot to vote at their previous address. This should be limited only to people that are not able to utilize Grace Period Registration.

9. TEMPORARY MOVE/HOMELESSNESS: I have moved temporarily. How can I vote?

A voter should vote at their address of **residence**, meaning their permanent address.²³ If the voter will be absent from that location only temporarily, the voter may request a vote by mail ballot. See [Question 26](#) for more details. If the voter has permanently moved, see [Question 8](#) to determine where the voter should vote. Sometimes, a voter may be unsure whether their move is temporary or permanent. If a voter considers their current living location their permanent residence, they may use Grace Period Registration or Election Day Registration to update their voter registration. See [Question 7](#).

Many voters may be experiencing housing insecurity or homelessness. This does not limit a person’s ability to vote. Under the Illinois Bill of Rights for the Homeless Act, any person experiencing homelessness who is residing in the State of Illinois has “the right to vote, register to vote, and receive documentation necessary to prove identity for voting without discrimination due to [their] housing status.”²⁴

If a voter experiencing homelessness is registering to vote on Election Day, the voter must provide two forms of identification, with one including the address that the voter is using as a residence for the purpose of voting. To prove residency, a voter experiencing homelessness may show “a piece of mail addressed to that individual and received at that address” or produce “a statement from a person authorizing use of the mailing address.”²⁵ Examples of identification that can be used to prove the voter’s residency address include:

- A piece of mail addressed to the voter and mailed to the address on the registration card;
- A statement, letter, or affidavit from a person like a case manager, homeowner, or religious leader that states the voter is allowed to use the mailing address; or
- An ID card issued by a homeless shelter showing the name and mailing address of the voter.

²³ 10 ILCS 5/3-1; 10 ILCS 5/3-2.

²⁴ 775 ILCS 45/10(a)(5).

²⁵ 10 ILCS 5/4-10; 10 ILCS 5/5-9; 10 ILCS 5/6-37.

10. STUDENT: [I am a college student. Can I register to vote where I go to school? What if I am taking classes remotely? Where can I vote?](#)

Yes. College students may vote at their school, provided that they have been an Illinois resident for at least 30 days prior to election day. A student may consider themselves a resident of Illinois if the student is physically present in the state and intends to remain at their current residence or campus (this does not mean that the student intends to remain at the address forever). *If a student considers two locations their residence, the student may choose which one to use as a voting residence.*

Students are held to the same eligibility requirements as any other voter in the jurisdiction. If a student is told that they are not able to vote at their school, Election Protection volunteers should ascertain if they have fulfilled all of the registration requirements (i.e. citizenship, age, and durational residency requirements) and that they have properly registered for this election and tried Grace Period or Election Day Registration if necessary. If the student is eligible to vote at that location and is still not being permitted to vote or is wrongly asked to vote provisionally, volunteers should alert your Captain so that they can contact the appropriate election official.

If a college student is taking classes remotely (i.e., the student is taking remote classes offered by an Illinois university), the student still may register to vote in Illinois if he or she is also an Illinois resident (as described above).

11. LIVING ABROAD: [I am living abroad and/or serving in the military. How can I register and/or vote?](#)

Absent uniformed service members (and their eligible dependents) and U.S. citizens living outside of the United States may request an absentee ballot under the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA). The voter can get step-by-step assistance and forms at <https://www.fvap.gov/illinois>, on the Illinois State Board of Elections website (<https://move.elections.il.gov/?Name=W9QmzPL1ChE0Bhad9QYeOdnB6s7h2EPlyFdDRgb9RVI%3d&T=637386276856237889>), or, for Chicago voters, on the Chicago Board of Election Commissioners website (<https://chicagoelections.com/en/military-overseas-voters.html>).

Registration/application for **unregistered** overseas civilian citizens **temporarily** residing outside the United States must be received by October 9, 2022. Overseas civilian citizens who currently are registered to vote and absent uniformed service members and eligible family members must have their signed ballot requests received by October 29, 2022. Requests for ballots can be submitted online through the Illinois Military and Overseas Empowerment website at <https://move.elections.il.gov/Default.aspx?ReturnUrl=%2f> or through <https://www.fvap.gov/illinois>.

The Chicago Board of Elections offers military/overseas voters emailed ballots, mailed ballots, or an online ballot option (available at <https://chicagoelections.com/en/military-overseas-voters.html>). Any eligible military/overseas voter with a valid Federal Post Card Application on file with the Chicago Board of Elections may log into the online ballot option, after which the voter must print and mail the ballot and supporting documents to the Chicago Election Board.²⁶

12. CRIMINAL CONVICTION: [I have a criminal conviction. Can I register to vote?](#)

Yes – unless the voter is currently confined under a sentence from a criminal conviction.

²⁶ Chicago Board of Elections, *Military/Overseas Voters*, <https://chicagoelections.gov/en/military-overseas-voters.html>.

The only people in Illinois who CANNOT vote because of their criminal record are people who:²⁷

- Are in prison or jail serving a sentence after conviction for any crime;*
- Are on furlough from confinement under a sentence, including medical furlough;
- Are in an Adult Transition Center; or
- Are on work-release (or periodic imprisonment) from confinement under a sentence (usually from prison).

Note that the majority of people in a **jail are being detained in pre-trial detention and have not been convicted of the crime they are being detained for and are eligible to vote.*

However, others who have been convicted of a crime CAN vote, including people previously convicted of felony crimes who are *not* currently serving a sentence of confinement or people on probation or parole.²⁸

After a person has served their sentence and is released from incarceration, they are again eligible to vote as soon as they are released but must re-register to vote. Illinois Department of Corrections and Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice are required to provide a nonpartisan peer-led civics program to soon-to-be-released citizens in their custody.²⁹ Upon release, a voter must be provided with information about their voting rights and a voter registration application.³⁰ If a voter was registered to vote before they were convicted to a sentence of confinement, their name will have been removed from the rolls, and the voter will need to register again. Refer to [Question 3](#) for more details on checking a voter's registration. See [Question 4](#) for more details on updating voter registration.

13. INCARCERATED: I am currently incarcerated. Can I register to vote?

People who are incarcerated under a sentence as part of a criminal conviction are not eligible to vote.

There are a number of situations where people who are detained are still eligible to vote. Voters who are detained in Illinois pre-trial pending acquittal or conviction of a crime may vote.³¹ This is the case for most people detained in a jail (rather than a prison). Please note that even though voting is legally allowed, it may be difficult for voters held pre-trial to access this right. Voters who are incarcerated under a sentence of confinement as a result of a criminal conviction are ineligible to vote or register to vote.

In Cook County Jail, the Chicago Board of Elections and the Cook County Clerk's office must establish a temporary branch polling place.³² Pollwatchers are allowed to observe proceedings at the established temporary branch polling place.³³

Election jurisdictions responsible for counties with a population under 3,000,000 (i.e., every election jurisdiction except Chicago Board of Elections and the Cook County Clerk's office) must collaborate with the primary county jail to facilitate voting by mail for voters who are detained pre-trial.³⁴ Jails in those

²⁷ 10 ILCS 5/3-5.

²⁸ 10 ILCS 5/3-5.

²⁹ 730 ILCS 200/10.

³⁰ 730 ILCS 5/3-14-1(a-3).

³¹ 10 ILCS 5/3-5.

³² 10 ILCS 5/19A-20(e).

³³ 10 ILCS 5/19A-20(e).

³⁴ 10 ILCS 5/19-2.3.

jurisdictions may establish a polling place for people who are residents of the county in the jail where they are being detained.³⁵ As of 2022, the only county to voluntarily operate a temporary polling place in this manner in a jail is Will County, where the Will County Clerk's office operates a temporary polling place in the Will County Adult Detention Facility.

Anyone in custody in a county jail who is eligible to vote must be given a voter registration application if requested.³⁶ County jails must provide voter registration applications to anyone being discharged from the jail who is eligible to vote.³⁷

HOW TO VOTE: ELECTION DAY

14. **HOURS:** When do the polls open/close on Election Day?

The General Election is Tuesday, November 8, 2022 ("Election Day").

The polls must be open from 6:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. on Election Day.³⁸ If you are an Election Protection volunteer and a polling place is not open at 6:00 a.m., advise voters to stay at the polling location and contact your captain/command center.

All otherwise-qualified voters who are in line at the polling place at 7:00 p.m. must be allowed to vote a regular ballot. If you are an Election Protection volunteer and a polling place prohibits those who were in line before 7:00 pm from voting, advise voters to stay at the polling location and contact your captain. Please collect as much information as you can regarding voters, including the names and contact information of each voter turned away.

15. **POLLING LOCATION:** Where do I vote on Election Day?

All Illinois voters can check ova.elections.il.gov/RegistrationLookup.aspx. Many jurisdictions have their own polling place lookup as well, which may be more up-to-date.

For the November 8, 2022 General Election, each jurisdiction must additionally establish one Vote Center location where all voters are allowed to vote on Election Day, regardless of the precinct in which they are registered.³⁹

There may be many last-minute polling place changes. Online polling place lookup tools are a good starting point but are not always updated in real time. The City of Chicago lookup tool (<https://chicagoelections.gov/en/your-voter-information.html>) or the Cook County Clerk's office polling place lookup tool (<https://www.cookcountyclerk.com/service/polling-places>) are often more accurate than the state-wide tool. For other jurisdictions, the state-wide tool may be more accurate than the local jurisdiction's tool; you can check on the Illinois State Board of Election's website, <https://ova.elections.il.gov/PollingPlaceLookup.aspx>, and enter the voter's address. Local jurisdiction

³⁵ 10 ILCS 5/19A-20(e)(2)

³⁶ 55 ILCS 5/3-15003.3.

³⁷ 55 ILCS 5/3-15003.3.

³⁸ 10 ILCS 5/17-1.

³⁹ 10 ILCS 5/11-8.

websites also may list last-minute polling place changes without updating their search tools. Additionally, you can call the relevant election authority (contact list here:

<https://www.elections.il.gov/ElectionOperations/ElectionAuthorities.aspx?MID=snNj91xkBrk%3d&T=637934788419655534>) to learn the latest updates on polling place closures. Election Protection volunteers should not call an election authority before first asking a Captain for assistance.

For the 2022 General Election, the Chicago Board of Elections is making significant changes to the size of election precincts and the precinct boundaries, as required by state statute. There will likely be many voters in Chicago who will be assigned to new polling places as a result of the changes to the precinct boundaries.

If a voter has moved recently and has not updated their voter registration, refer to [Questions 8](#) and [9](#).

16. CLOSING: What if the polls close when I am already in line?

Remain in line. All otherwise-qualified voters who are in line at the polling place at 7:00 p.m. must be allowed to vote a regular ballot.

If you are an Election Protection volunteer and a polling place prohibits those who were in line before 7:00 pm from voting, advise voters to stay at the polling location and contact your Captain. Try to collect as much information as you can regarding voters, including the names and contact information of voters turned away.

17. IDENTIFICATION: What identification is required to vote?

In general, voters in Illinois do NOT have to provide identification at the polling place in order to vote a regular ballot. Instead, voters must fill out a form, including their signature. An Election Judge will verify that the voter's signature matches the signature used by the voter for initial registration.⁴⁰ **If it seems like a particular voter or group of voters might have been targeted or unfairly asked for proof of identification, this issue should be reported to 866-OUR-VOTE, Election Protection call center captains, field captains, or the command center, so that the relevant election authorities can be alerted.**

Exceptions where identification is required:

Voters using Election Day Registration (EDR) **or** a first-time voter who registered by mail but did not submit sufficient proof of identity with the registration application: must present **two** IDs the first time they vote. At least one of the IDs must contain the voter's current address (or, in the case of voters experiencing homelessness, a mailing address used by the voter, see [Question 9](#) for details). Identification must not be expired. Note that the Secretary of State's office has extended the deadline to renew expired driver's licenses, ID cards, and learner's permits to December 1, 2022.

Some examples of acceptable IDs include:⁴¹

⁴⁰ See, e.g., <https://chicagoelections.gov/en/when-you-need-id-to-vote.html>.

⁴¹ In the past, some jurisdictions have asserted that both IDs must include the applicant's address. The Illinois Election Code, however, states that "the applicant [must] furnish two forms of identification, and except in the case of a homeless individual, one of which must include [their] residence address . . ." 10 ILCS 5/4-10; 10 ILCS 5/5-9; 10 ILCS 5/6-37. The Illinois State Board of Elections also explicitly states that one ID must include an address. Illinois State Board of Elections, *Frequently Asked Questions*, <https://www.elections.il.gov/Main/FAQ.aspx#VoterRegistration>. Other authorities stating that "at least" one I.D. must have a resident's current address include the [Chicago Board of Election Commissioners](#), the [Cook County Clerk's Office](#), and [Lake County](#).

- Illinois driver's license or state ID card;
- Employee or student ID;
- Credit card;
- Social Security card;
- Birth certificate;
- Utility bill in the voter's name;
- Mail postmarked to the voter;
- Valid U.S. passport;
- Public assistance ID card (such as Illinois Link card); or
- Lease or rental contract.

If a voter's qualifications are challenged, the voter may be required to produce two forms of identification showing their current residential address, including not more than one piece of mail addressed to the voter at their current residence address and postmarked not earlier than 30 days before the date of the election. Alternatively, voters may have a witness who is registered to vote in that precinct attest to the voter's qualifications and take an oath. In either case, the voter may then cast a regular ballot.⁴²

Some jurisdictions (such as Lake County) may require that the voter present two forms of identification if they are on the "inactive" voter list that may result from the U.S. Postal service returning as undeliverable a voter verification postcard to the election authority.⁴³

If a voter is unable to show identification when required—if the voter registered by mail without providing identification, was successfully challenged, is on the inactive list, or is using EDR—the voter may vote by provisional ballot.⁴⁴ *However, if it is at all possible, a voter should be encouraged to go back and get an ID before entering the polls rather than cast a provisional ballot, because provisional ballots are not always counted promptly – and for the provisional ballot to count, the voter will have to later present ID at their local election office.*

18. NO IDENTIFICATION: *Can I vote without providing identification?*

Yes. In general, voters in Illinois do NOT have to provide identification at the polling place in order to vote a regular ballot. Instead, voters must fill out a form, including their signature. An Election Judge will verify that the voter's signature matches the signature used by the voter for initial registration.⁴⁵ See [Question 17](#) for more information/exceptions.

19. NOT ON ROLLS AT MY POLLING PLACE: *I am at my polling place but am not showing up on the voter registration roll. Can I vote where I am?*

If a voter is not appearing on the voting rolls, check the Illinois State Board of Elections' website (<http://ova.elections.il.gov/RegistrationLookup.aspx>) to see if the voter is registered. If the voter is listed as registered, the website also will state the voter's assigned polling location.

⁴² 10 ILCS 5/17-10.

⁴³ See, e.g., <https://www.lakecountyil.gov/4113/Identification-for-Registration-and-Voti>.

⁴⁴ 10 ILCS 5/18A-5.

⁴⁵ See, e.g., <https://chicagoelections.gov/en/when-you-need-id-to-vote.html>.

You may additionally check the website of the voter's specific election jurisdiction. See [Question 3](#) for websites of some other Illinois jurisdictions. These websites also will tell the voter their correct polling place.

If a voter is not found on the rolls of the polling place where the voter is attempting to vote, encourage the election judge to take steps to identify the cause of the problem, and hopefully rectify the situation *before* someone is given a provisional ballot and before someone votes on a provisional ballot. This could include calling the voter's respective election authority, looking at the online Illinois voter registration lookup noted above, or looking at online lookup tools specific to that voter's jurisdiction. The election judge may also have a helpline that they may call.

If the voter is not found registered as a voter in Illinois but is at the correct precinct for the voter's address, determine whether the precinct offers Election Day Registration. If the precinct offers Election Day Registration and the voter has the required documentation (two IDs, including one with a current address), then the voter can use Election Day Registration and vote a regular ballot (does not need to use a provisional ballot).

If that precinct does not offer Election Day Registration, identify where in the county it is being offered (contact information for all jurisdictions available at <https://www.elections.il.gov/ElectionOperations/ElectionAuthorities.aspx>). The voter will need to arrive at the location offering Election Day Registration before polls close. In those situations, it may be the case that the location offering Election Day Registration is not a polling place, and they may have to go to a separate polling place **before polls close** after registering. See [Question 7](#) for more information on EDR.

If the voter is in the correct precinct but cannot use Election Day Registration because of lack of ID, the voter can vote by provisional ballot. This is a *last resort* because provisional ballots will be counted only if the election jurisdiction can later verify that the voter was properly registered,⁴⁶ and they most likely will not be counted on Election Day. In most elections, if the voter uses a provisional ballot, the voter will have 7 days to bring adequate ID to their local election board.⁴⁷ Learn more about provisional ballot procedures in [Question 20](#).

Note that on Election Day voters MUST vote in their assigned polling place or a vote center (universal polling place) or only the federal and statewide offices will be counted from their provisional ballot (assuming that the voter is otherwise eligible to vote).⁴⁸

20. PROVISIONAL BALLOT: If I don't have an ID, can I request a provisional ballot? My name is not on the rolls at my polling place, can I request a provisional ballot?

Voters should use provisional ballots only as a last resort. Provisional ballots will be counted only if the election authority can later verify that the voter was properly registered.⁴⁹ Provisional ballots often will not be counted on Election Day. Inquire why the voter was offered a provisional ballot and encourage the voter to take steps to be able to cast a regular ballot. If the voter is not correctly registered, the voter should be offered the opportunity to do Grace Period Registration or Election Day Registration (see [Question 7](#)) before being offered a provisional ballot.

⁴⁶ 10 ILCS 5/18A-5.

⁴⁷ 10 ILCS 5/18A-5(d).

⁴⁸ 10 ILCS 5/18A-15(b)(1).

⁴⁹ 10 ILCS 5/18A-5.

The voter should be offered a provisional ballot only when:

- The voter's voting status has been successfully challenged;
- A voter registered by mail but did not provide identification, it is that voter's first time voting in that precinct, they do not have sufficient ID with them at the polling place, and they are unable to go back to retrieve ID and return to the polling place;
- There is an active dispute about whether the poll should be open at that time, for example if parties are in the process of obtaining a court order extending the time for closing the polls;
- The voter's name appears on the list of voters who voted during the early voting period, even though the voter claims not to have voted during the early voting period; or
- In some limited cases where a voter received a vote by mail ballot but wishes to vote in person. Note that this is a rare circumstance and can likely be avoided. See [Questions 34](#), [40](#), or [41](#).

Other than for these reasons, the voter should be able to cast a regular ballot. *A provisional ballot should be a last resort.* An individual found eligible to cast a provisional ballot must sign an affidavit stating that the individual is an eligible voter in the jurisdiction.

A voter who cast a provisional ballot can later check to see if their provisional ballot was counted by visiting <https://www.elections.il.gov/VotingAndRegistrationSystems/ProvisionalBallotSearch.aspx>. Chicago voters may additionally check <https://chicagoelections.com/en/provisional-information.html>.

If the voter uses a provisional ballot, the voter will have 7 days to provide any necessary documentation to their local election board.⁵⁰

HOW TO VOTE: EARLY VOTING **(in some states called "in-person absentee")**

21. AVAILABILITY: Is there early voting in my state (whether called early voting or in person absentee voting)?

Yes. Registered voters may go in person to early voting sites established by the election jurisdiction or may go to the board of elections office to vote. The period for early voting begins 40 days prior to an election and extends through the end of the day before Election Day.⁵¹ Many election jurisdictions provide several early voting locations; check the website of the specific jurisdiction for details on dates, times, and locations. Note that election jurisdictions in Illinois are each of the counties and some additional city jurisdictions (like Chicago) that operate separately from the county they are in.

22. ELIGIBILITY: Do I have to have a reason to vote early?

No. All voters in Illinois are eligible to vote before Election Day at any site established as an early voting site by the election authority. No special circumstances or reasons are necessary to vote early.⁵²

⁵⁰ 10 ILCS 5/18A-5(a)(7); 10 ILCS 5/18A-15.

⁵¹ 10 ILCS 5/19A-15(a).

⁵² 10 ILCS 5/19A-5

23. **WHEN:** When does early voting begin/end?

In jurisdictions with permanent early voting locations, early voting begins at least 15 days prior to an election and, in some jurisdictions as early as 40 days prior to an election, and extends through the end of the day before Election Day.⁵³ Many election jurisdictions provide several early voting locations; check the website of the specific jurisdiction for details on dates, times, and locations.

24. **WHERE:** Where do I vote during early voting?

Many election jurisdictions provide several early voting locations; check the website of the specific jurisdiction for details. Note that election jurisdictions in Illinois are each of the counties and some additional city jurisdictions (like Chicago) that operate separately from the county they are in. Voters can look up the locations of early voting polling places in their election jurisdiction on the State Board of Elections website at

<https://www.elections.il.gov/VotingAndRegistrationSystems/EarlyVotingLocationsSearch.aspx>. A list of early voting hours and locations will be available on the Illinois State Board of Elections' website (www.elections.il.gov) at least 10 days prior to the beginning of any early voting period.

25. **IDENTIFICATION:** What identification is required for early voting? What if I don't have an ID?

In general, voters in Illinois do NOT have to provide identification at the polling place in order to vote a regular ballot.⁵⁴ Instead, voters must fill out a form, which includes their signature. An Election Judge will verify that the voter's signature matches the signature used by the voter for initial registration.

There are exceptions to this: (1) Voters using same day registration (same as Election Day Registration but during the early voting period) *or* (2) first-time voters who registered by mail but did not submit sufficient proof of identity with the registration application. Those voters must present **two** IDs the first time they vote, and at least one of them must contain the voter's current address (or, in the case of voters experiencing homelessness, a mailing address used by the voter). Some examples of acceptable IDs include:⁵⁵

- Illinois driver's license or state ID card;
- Employee or student ID;
- Credit card;
- Social Security card;
- Birth certificate;
- Utility bill in the voter's name;
- Mail postmarked to the voter;
- Valid U.S. passport;
- Public assistance ID card (such as Illinois Link card); or

⁵³ 10 ILCS 5/19A-15.

⁵⁴ See, e.g., <https://chicagoelections.gov/en/when-you-need-id-to-vote.html>.

⁵⁵ In the past, some jurisdictions have asserted that both IDs must include the applicant's address. The Illinois Election Code, however, states that "the applicant [must] furnish two forms of identification, and except in the case of a homeless individual, one of which must include [their] residence address" 10 ILCS 5/4-10; 10 ILCS 5/5-9; 10 ILCS 5/6-37. The Illinois State Board of Elections also explicitly states that one ID must include an address. Illinois State Board of Elections, *Frequently Asked Questions*, <https://www.elections.il.gov/Main/FAQ.aspx#VoterRegistration>. Other authorities stating that "at least" one I.D. must have a resident's current address include the [Chicago Board of Election Commissioners](#), the [Cook County Clerk's Office](#), and Lake County.

- Lease or rental contract.

If a voter's qualifications are challenged, the voter may be required to produce two forms of identification showing their current residential address. One of the forms of ID may be a piece of mail addressed to the voter at their current residence address and postmarked not earlier than 30 days before the date of the election. Alternatively, voters may have a witness who is registered to vote in that precinct attest to the voter's qualifications and take an oath. In either case, the voter may then cast a regular ballot.⁵⁶ **If it seems like a particular voter or group of voters might have been targeted or challenged unfairly, this issue should be reported to 866-OUR-VOTE, Election Protection call center captains, field captains, or the command center, so that the relevant election authorities can be alerted.**

Some jurisdictions (such as Lake County) may require that the voter present two forms of identification if they are on the "inactive" voter list, which may result from the U.S. Postal service returning as undeliverable a voter verification postcard to the election authority.⁵⁷

If a voter is unable to show identification when required—if the voter registered by mail without providing identification, was successfully challenged, is on the inactive list, or is using EDR—the voter may vote by provisional ballot.⁵⁸ *However, if it is at all possible, a voter should be encouraged to leave the polling place and retrieve required ID rather than cast a provisional ballot, because provisional ballots are not always counted promptly – and, for the provisional ballot to later be counted, the voter will later have to go to their local election office and produce the required ID.*

HOW TO VOTE: VOTE BY MAIL

26. AUTOMATIC MAIL BALLOT: Will I automatically be sent a ballot in the mail?

Only Illinois voters who register for "permanent vote by mail" will be mailed a ballot automatically.⁵⁹

Voters may apply to vote by mail up to 90 days prior to an election and may apply for vote by mail for a single election or apply for permanent vote by mail status.⁶⁰ Those applications must be received no later than 5 days prior to the election if the application is mailed or submitted electronically, and no later than one day prior to the election if the application is delivered in person at the office of the election authority.⁶¹

Voters can obtain a vote by mail ballot application on the State Board of Elections website (<https://www.elections.il.gov/ElectionOperations/VotingByMail.aspx>) or, for Chicago voters, the Chicago Board of Election Commissioners' website (<https://chicagoelections.com/en/vote-by-mail.html>).

⁵⁶ 10 ILCS 5/17-10.

⁵⁷ See, e.g., <https://www.lakecountyil.gov/4113/Identification-for-Registration-and-Voti>.

⁵⁸ 10 ILCS 5/18A-5.

⁵⁹ 10 ILCS 5/19-4.

⁶⁰ 10 ILCS 5/19-3.

⁶¹ 10 ILCS 5/19-2; 10 ILCS 5/19-4.

27. ELIGIBILITY: Do I need a specific reason to vote by mail?

No. Any qualified voter in Illinois who is properly registered to vote may request a vote by mail ballot. No special circumstances or excuses are necessary.⁶²

28. APPLICATION DEADLINE: What is the deadline for requesting a mail-in ballot?

Voters may apply to vote by mail up to 90 days prior to an election. Voters who have previously applied for and been placed on permanent vote by mail status do not need to apply for any subsequent elections.

If the voter requests a vote by mail ballot *by mail or online*, the application must be received by the jurisdiction's election authority no later than five days prior to Election Day.⁶³ For the 2022 General Election, this means the deadline is November 3, 2022.

If the voter requests a vote by mail ballot *in-person* at the local election office, they must do so no later than one day before the election.⁶⁴ For the 2022 General Election, that means by close of business on November 7, 2022.

If an application for a vote by mail ballot is submitted by mail outside the U.S., the application must be made not less than 30 days prior to the election to receive the full ballot, or less than 30 days prior to the election to receive the federal ballot only.

29. APPLICATION RETURN: How do I submit my mail-in ballot application? Can someone return it for me? Does it have to be postmarked by a specific date?

Vote by mail applications should be sent to the county clerk or board of election commissioners with jurisdiction over the voter. A completed application for a vote by mail ballot can be mailed, completed online, delivered in person to the local election authority, or (in some jurisdictions) emailed.⁶⁵ Anyone may turn in the completed application for a vote by mail ballot.⁶⁶

The application should not be sent to the State Board of Elections. Doing so will delay, and may prevent, the processing of the voter's application and ballot.

The application does not have to be postmarked by a specific date. It must be received by the deadlines as outlined in [Question 28](#).

30. IDENTIFICATION: Are there identification requirements when I return my mail-in ballot application and/or ballot?

When requesting a vote by mail ballot online, the voter will need an Illinois driver's license number or Illinois state ID number.

⁶² 10 ILCS 5/19-1.

⁶³ 10 ILCS 5/19-4.

⁶⁴ 10 ILCS 5/19-4.

⁶⁵ 10 ILCS 5/19-2.

⁶⁶ 10 ILCS 5/19-3.

When requesting a vote by mail ballot on paper, the signature on the application will be compared to the signature on the originally completed voter registration card to ensure that they match.

When returning a vote by mail ballot, the signature on the return envelope will be compared to the signature on the originally completed voter registration card to ensure that they match.

31. RECEIVING MAIL BALLOT: Does the ballot have to be sent to my home, or can I have it sent somewhere else? What if I don't have a home address or my address is a PO Box?

The voter's ballot does not have to be sent to their home address. The vote by mail application contains one section for the voter to enter their Illinois address where they have lived for at least 30 days or more preceding the election, and a separate section where the voter may enter the address where they would like their ballot to be mailed, if different. The ballot may be mailed to a P.O. box.

32. MISSED THE APPLICATION DEADLINE: What if I have not requested a mail-in ballot by the deadline?

Voters who miss the deadline to request a vote by mail ballot can vote in-person.

33. STATUS OF APPLICATION AND/OR BALLOT: How can I check the status of my application and/or mail-in ballot?

Voters should contact their local election authority to check the status of their mail application or ballot. Voters in Chicago can check the status of their vote by mail ballot at www.chicagoelections.gov/en/vote-by-mail-status.html

34. APPLICATION OR BALLOT REJECTED: I learned my mail-in ballot application and/or ballot was rejected. What can I do to fix any errors or get another one?

Application Rejected

If an *application* was rejected, the voter may re-submit a vote by mail application if within the deadline. The voter may also need to call their local election authority to learn why the application was rejected. The voter may need to register to vote or update their voter registration. If the election authority states that there was an error in the voter's application, the voter may ask for assistance in filling out a new vote by mail application, if within the deadline.

Ballot Rejected

A vote by mail ballot may be rejected:

- If the voter didn't sign the vote by mail ballot;
- If the election judge or official determines that the signature on the vote by mail ballot does not match the voter's signature;
- If the ballot envelope is open or has been opened and resealed;
- If the voter has already cast an early or grace period ballot; or
- If the voter voted in person on election day or the voter is not a duly registered voter in the precinct.⁶⁷

⁶⁷ 10 ILCS 5/19-8(g).

If a vote by mail ballot is rejected, the election authority will notify the voter why his or her ballot was rejected within 2 days. The voter will have until the 14th day after the election to show cause as to why the ballot should not be rejected. A reviewing panel of election judges will make a final determination as to the validity of the vote by mail ballot.⁶⁸ If there is an issue with a signature, the voter will be given the opportunity to submit a statement that the ballot was completed and sent by the voter in order to have the ballot counted.

35. COMPLETING BALLOT: [How do I complete the mail-in ballot?](#)

Vote by mail ballots must contain signed and dated affidavits on the application and the ballot envelope where indicated, attesting to the accuracy of information provided on the application.⁶⁹ Voters must use blue or black ink and must seal the envelope enclosing the ballot. Instructions should appear in the information mailed from the election authority as well.

36. ASSISTANCE COMPLETING BALLOT: [Can someone assist me in filling out my ballot?](#)

Yes. A voter may instruct someone to assist them in marking their ballot. All that is required is that the voter exercises his or her physical abilities to their reasonable limit.⁷⁰

37. DEADLINE TO RETURN BALLOT: [What is the deadline for the ballot to be received? Does it have to be postmarked by a specific date? Can I drop it off in person?](#)

Vote by mail ballots must be postmarked by Election Day and received within 14 days of the election.⁷¹ Ballots that arrive after Election Day without a postmark but within the 14 day period shall be assumed to have been mailed on the date certified by the voter on the ballot.⁷²

Voters may deliver vote by mail ballots in-person to their election authority at their office. Election authorities may set up collection sites (sometimes known as dropboxes) where voters can return vote by mail ballots. Ballots returned to the collection sites can be returned up to the close of polls on Election Day.⁷³

38. BALLOT DROP OFF LOCATIONS: [What are the locations for dropping off a ballot \(instead of mailing it\)?](#)

Voters can locate dropboxes for their jurisdiction at <https://www.elections.il.gov/VotingAndRegistrationSystems/VoteByMailBallotDropBoxLocations.aspx?MID=ORRSrGzAdpc%3d&T=637853672752519534>. Not all counties in Illinois use dropboxes.

Chicago voters can also see drop box locations at <https://chicagoelections.gov/en/drop-boxes.html>. Suburban Cook County voters may see drop box locations at <https://www.cookcountyclerk.com/service/mail-ballot-drop-box-locations>.

⁶⁸ 10 ILCS 5/19-8(g-5).

⁶⁹ 10 ILCS 5/19-6.

⁷⁰ 10 ILCS 5/19-1.

⁷¹ 10 ILCS 5/19-8; 10 ILCS 5/18A-15.

⁷² 10 ILCS 5/19-8(c).

⁷³ 10 ILCS 5/19-6.

Voters should be cautioned that election authorities may have different hours of operation on election day and may not be open until the polls close. Voters may still want to contact their local election authority to learn if their jurisdiction uses dropboxes, where those dropboxes are located, and if there are specified days and hours when those dropboxes can be accessed.

39. ASSISTANCE DROPPING OFF BALLOT: [Can someone else drop off my completed ballot for me?](#)

Yes. A voter may authorize any person to return their vote by mail ballot to the election authority, as long as the voter has signed the affidavit on the ballot envelope affirming that authorization was given to deliver the ballot.⁷⁴

40. LOST OR SPOILED BALLOT: [What if I lost my mail-in ballot, made a mistake on it \(spoiled it\), or I received an incorrect ballot?](#)

If the voter lost or spoiled their ballot, or received an incorrect one, they should contact their local election authority. If time permits, they may be able to receive a replacement ballot. If there is not sufficient time to deliver a new ballot, the voter can surrender the damaged or incorrect ballot at an early voting location or a precinct polling place on Election Day and vote in person.⁷⁵

If the voter never received their vote by mail ballot, or if the voter completed and returned a vote by mail ballot but was informed that the election authority did not receive that vote by mail ballot, the voter may execute an affidavit in front of the election judges stating the circumstances and then may vote in-person on a regular ballot and not a provisional ballot.⁷⁶

41. NON-RECEIPT OF BALLOT: [What if I requested a mail-in ballot but have not received it? What are my options for voting?](#)

Voters should first check their election jurisdiction's website to determine the status of their vote by mail ballot. Depending on how close it is to Election Day, the voter may wish to wait longer for the ballot to arrive in the mail. Additionally, the voter may learn of some problem with their vote by mail ballot application.

If the voter never receives the vote by mail ballot, the voter may vote in-person if the voter signs an affidavit stating that the voter never received a vote by mail ballot.⁷⁷ Voters should be given a regular ballot and not a provisional ballot in this circumstance.

42. IN PERSON OPTION: [What if I requested or received a mail-in ballot but I want to vote in person on Election Day?](#)

If the voter has already received their vote by mail ballot:

⁷⁴ 10 ILCS 5/19-6.

⁷⁵ 10 ILCS 5/17-9; 10 ILCS 5/18-5.

⁷⁶ 10 ILCS 5/17-9; 10 ILCS 5/18-5.

⁷⁷ 10 ILCS 5/17-9; 10 ILCS 5/18-5.

The voter should take their vote by mail ballot with them to an early voting site or to their polling place on Election Day and surrender it to an election judge.⁷⁸ Their vote by mail ballot will be voided and they will receive a regular ballot.

If the voter never received their vote by mail ballot:

The voter may execute an affidavit in front of the election judges certifying that they have not received their ballot. The voter will then be issued a regular ballot and not a provisional ballot.⁷⁹

If their ballot arrives after they have voted but on or before Election Day, the voter must discard the vote by mail ballot. The voter should not attempt to vote their vote by mail a ballot after voting in person. Doing so is a class 3 felony. And because voting systems will not allow more than one vote per voter, their vote by mail ballot will be rejected.

If the voter received their ballot but lost it:

The voter may sign an affidavit certifying that they have not yet voted in this election. They will then be issued a provisional ballot.⁸⁰ See [Question 40](#) for more information about lost or spoiled ballots.

If the election authority never received the voter's completed ballot:

If the voter completed and returned a vote by mail ballot but was informed that the election authority did not receive that vote by mail ballot, the voter may execute an affidavit in front of the election judges stating the circumstances and then may vote in-person on a regular ballot and not a provisional ballot.⁸¹

If a voter is concerned because they have mailed their ballot but it has not yet been received by the election authority, ask the voter when they put the ballot in the mail. If it has been *less* than 10 days (and it is not yet Election Day), encourage the voter to wait and continue checking the status of their ballot. If it has been 10 days or *more*, and the voter affirmatively knows that the ballot has not been received (either by checking online or by calling their election authority), then advise the voter to vote in person by executing an affidavit as described above and vote on a regular ballot and not a provisional ballot.

Additionally, if it is Election Day and the voter knows that their ballot has not been received (either by checking an online tool or by calling the election authority), some voters may be more comfortable going in-person to vote. Remember, in Illinois a vote by mail ballot will count so long as it is postmarked by Election Day and received by the election authority within 14 days of Election Day. A voter who has sent a vote by mail ballot does not need to vote in-person on Election Day unless they have reason to believe that their ballot will not be postmarked by Election Day or will not arrive within 14 days of Election Day.

HOW TO VOTE: ABSENTEE

⁷⁸ 10 ILCS 5/17-9; 10 ILCS 5/18-5.

⁷⁹ 10 ILCS 5/17-9; 10 ILCS 5/18-5.

⁸⁰ 10 ILCS 5/18A-5(6).

⁸¹ 10 ILCS 5/17-9; 10 ILCS 5/18-5.

Beginning with the 2016 election cycle, Illinois stopped using the term “absentee.” There is no difference in Illinois between “absentee” and “vote by mail.” Thus, this section will refer to answers in the “vote by mail” section above.

43. ELIGIBILITY: Am I eligible to request an absentee ballot?

See [Question 27](#).

44. APPLICATION DEADLINE: What is the deadline for requesting an absentee ballot?

See [Question 28](#).

45. IDENTIFICATION: Are there any identification requirements?

See [Question 30](#).

46. EMERGENCY: Is there an emergency absentee ballot? If so, am I eligible?

If a voter is admitted to a hospital, nursing home, or rehabilitation center 14 days or less before the election, and either (a) does not expect to be released on or before Election Day, or (b) if released, does not expect to be able to travel to the polling place on Election Day, then the voter can complete an application for Physically Incapacitated Elector to apply for a vote by mail ballot. The voter must contact their local election authority to request this form.

The voter must complete the application and their physician, registered nurse, or physician assistant must complete and sign the Certificate of Attending Health Care Professional section of the application.

After the application is complete, any voter registered in the same precinct, or the voter’s relative, can then hand deliver the application to the voter’s local election authority. The election authority will provide the vote by mail ballot to the person who delivered the voter’s application.

Once the voter receives the ballot, the voter should vote the ballot in secret and complete the certification on the absentee ballot return envelope. The voter should give their voted absentee ballot back to the person who delivered their application. This person must return the voter’s completed ballot to their local election authority.⁸²

If a voter calls saying they have recently been hospitalized, or are quarantined and homebound due to COVID-19, please inform your Captain. These procedures are especially important in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. In the March 2020 primary, the Illinois State Board of Elections allowed for a broader interpretation of the below procedures to apply to voters who were homebound outside of hospitals, and Voters should advocate for applying this process to homebound voters in the November 8, 2022 election, if needed. Please note that even with the broader interpretation, this process is difficult for most voters to navigate, and may not be possible to complete.

The application for Chicago voters can be found at https://app.chicagoelections.com/Documents/general/Form502_G2022_English.pdf.

⁸² 10 ILCS 5/19-13

See the Illinois State Board of Election's brochure about voting while hospitalized, available on this webpage, <https://www.elections.il.gov/electionoperations/votingbymail.aspx>, for further information.

47. **APPLICATION RETURN:** Where and how can I return my absentee ballot application? Can someone return it for me?

See [Question 29](#).

48. **STATUS OF APPLICATION AND/OR BALLOT:** How can I check the status of my absentee ballot application and/or absentee ballot return?

See [Question 33](#).

49. **APPLICATION OR BALLOT REJECTED:** I learned my absentee ballot application and/or ballot was rejected. How can I confirm this and what can I do to fix any errors or get another one?

See [Question 34](#).

50. **COMPLETING BALLOT:** How do I complete the absentee ballot?

See [Question 35](#).

51. **ASSISTANCE COMPLETING BALLOT:** Can someone assist me filling out the ballot?

See [Question 36](#).

52. **BALLOT DEADLINES:** What is the deadline for the ballot to be postmarked and/or received by, including dropping it off in person?

See [Question 37](#).

53. **BALLOT DROP OFF LOCATIONS:** Where can I drop off a ballot (instead of mailing it)?

See [Question 38](#).

54. **ASSISTANCE DROPPING OFF:** Can someone else drop off my completed ballot for me?

See [Question 39](#).

55. **LOST OR SPOILED:** What if I lost my absentee ballot or it is spoiled or I received an incorrect one?

See [Question 40](#).

56. **NON-RECEIPT OF BALLOT:** What if I requested an absentee ballot but have not received it? Can I do anything?

See [Question 41](#).

57. IN PERSON OPTION: What if I requested an absentee ballot but I want to vote in person on Election Day?

See [Question 42](#).

58. IN PERSON ABSENTEE: Where do I vote in-person absentee? When can I do this?

Illinois utilizes Early Voting and does not refer to “in-person absentee” voting. See [Questions 21 through 25](#) for details about Early Voting.

POLLING PLACE ISSUES

59. POLLING PLACE NOT OPEN: The polling place is not open. What should I do?

There may be last-minute polling place changes. Online polling place lookup tools are a good starting point but are not always updated in real time. The City of Chicago lookup tool (<https://chicagoelections.gov/en/your-voter-information.html>) or the Cook County Clerk’s office polling place lookup tool (<https://www.cookcountyclerk.com/service/polling-places>) are often more accurate than the state-wide tool. For other jurisdictions, the state-wide tool may be more accurate than the local jurisdiction’s tool; you can check on the Illinois State Board of Election’s website, <https://ova.elections.il.gov/PollingPlaceLookup.aspx>, and enter the voter’s address. Local jurisdiction websites also may list last-minute polling place changes without updating their search tools. Additionally, you can call the relevant election authority to learn the latest updates on polling place closures. Election Protection volunteers should not call an election authority before first asking a Captain for assistance.

Each election jurisdiction shall establish one Vote Center (universal polling place) where any voter within the jurisdiction may vote, regardless of assigned precinct.⁸³ Election Protection volunteers should share the address of the universal polling place with a voter while trying to address the problem of a voter’s assigned polling place being closed.

***Note to Election Protection field volunteer:** If you learn of a polling place not opening on time or one that is closed, notify your Captain immediately, making sure to take down names and contact information of voters who are waiting or who had to leave. If you learn of a changed polling place location, notify your Captain or call the hotline at 866-OUR-VOTE.

***Note to Election Protection hotline volunteer:** If you learn of a polling place not opening on time or one that is closed, notify your Captain immediately, making sure to take down names and contact information of voters who are waiting or who had to leave.

60. LONG LINES: There are long lines at the polling place. What should I do? What if the polls are closing while I’m in line?

If the line at a polling place seems exceptionally long, ask if the voter can tell if there is a problem at the polling place (for example: a polling place running out of ballots), or if the line is long simply because there are a large number of voters. Find out how long the voter is able to wait at the polling place.

⁸³ 10 ILCS 5/11-8.

Election Protection volunteers should ask a Captain if you should report the long lines to the voter's local election authority (see [Question 73](#) for contact information).

Every Illinois jurisdiction must have one Vote Center (universal polling place) available where anyone from the election jurisdiction may cast a ballot, regardless of assigned precinct.⁸⁴ If the voter is unable to wait in the line to vote, share the address of the universal polling place as another option. Additionally, voters with a disability or other voters who may have difficulty standing for long periods of time should ask a poll worker for accommodations.

The polls must be open from 6:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. on Election Day.⁸⁵ If you are an Election Protection hotline volunteer or a field volunteer and a polling place is not open at 6:00 a.m., advise voters to stay at the polling location and contact your hotline captain/command center. Make sure to get each voter's name and contact information, especially if they have to leave before the polling place is open.

All otherwise-qualified voters who are in line at the polling place at 7:00 p.m. must be allowed to vote a regular ballot. If you are an Election Protection volunteer and a polling place prohibits those who were in line before 7:00 pm from voting, advise voters to stay at the polling location and contact your Captain.

***Note to Election Protection field and hotline volunteers:** If you learn of long lines, notify your Captain immediately. If you learn that a polling place prohibits those who were in line by the time the polls closed from voting, advise voters to stay at the polling location and contact your Captain immediately. Please collect as much information as you can regarding voters, including the names and contact information of each voter turned away.

61. **EQUIPMENT FAILURE:** What should I do if there are equipment problems at my precinct?

Voters should immediately notify the poll workers if the voting equipment breaks down. Encourage the poll workers to call in the problem to the local election authority. If the problem cannot be fixed in a timely manner, and the breakdown is keeping the voter from casting a ballot, the voter should ask for an paper ballot. Voters should NOT cast a provisional ballot, because provisional ballots are not always counted promptly.

***Note to Election Protection hotline volunteer:** If you learn of equipment not working properly at a polling place, and you learn that it is keeping voters from voting, notify your hotline captain immediately. Election Protection volunteers should take note of the type of equipment failure (e.g. ballot scanner, e-pollbook, voting machine, or a different type of equipment) and the impact on voters; ask a Captain if you should report the equipment failure to the voter's local election authority (see [Question 73](#) for contact information).

62. **EQUIPMENT ASSISTANCE:** I don't know how to use the voting equipment. Can I get help?

Before using the voting machine, a voter can request that an election judge/poll worker provide instructions on how to use the machine.⁸⁶ An instruction model for each mechanically-operated machine can also be provided for demonstration, showing a portion of the face of the voting machine.⁸⁷ After

⁸⁴ 10 ILCS 5/11-8.

⁸⁵ 10 ILCS 5/17-1.

⁸⁶ 10 ILCS 5/24-10.

⁸⁷ 10 ILCS 5/24-10.

giving instructions to the voter, the poll worker must leave the booth so that the voter can vote confidentially.⁸⁸ A voter may also ask for a paper ballot if they prefer that instead of a voting machine.

63. **PHYSICAL DISABILITY:** I have a physical disability and need assistance. Is my polling place ADA compliant? Does my voting location have an accessible voting system?

Illinois law requires that each polling place be accessible to voters with disabilities unless the polling place is granted an exemption by the State Board of Elections,⁸⁹ but in practice many polling places may not be sufficiently accessible. A voter who has a disability and is assigned to a polling place that is inaccessible to them is entitled to be provided a ballot up to 50 feet from the entrance to the polling place (often called “curbside voting”).⁹⁰ See [Question 71](#) for information about curbside voting.

If a voter is unable to stand in a long line because of a disability, the voter may ask the election judge for an accommodation, such as a chair.

64. **READING/LANGUAGE ASSISTANCE:** I am blind, have a physical disability, or cannot read English and require assistance in order to vote. Can I get assistance at the polls?

Yes. Any voter who needs assistance voting is entitled to have any person of their choice – other than the voter’s employer, an agent of the employer, or an officer or agent of the voter’s union – mark the voter’s choices or assist the voter in marking their choices on the ballot, as long as the voter makes the choices on the ballot and the person helping marks only the choices made by the voter.⁹¹ The person assisting can be a friend or family member, for example, and the assister is not required to be a registered voter. The voter will, and the assister may, be required to sign an affidavit form provided by the election judge/poll worker.⁹²

There may be situations where the voter wants an election judge/poll worker or a pollwatcher to serve as an assister. This is allowed, but there have been instances where partisan pollwatchers have inappropriately pressured voters while “assisting” them, as well as instances where election judges have been suspicious of pollwatchers assisting voters. Election Protection volunteers should notify your Captain if you have concerns.

In many jurisdictions, the federal Voting Rights Act requires polling places to provide written translations and oral interpretation (i.e. bilingual election judges/poll workers) in other languages.⁹³ In Illinois, the federal Voting Rights Act requires Chicago, Cook County, DuPage County, Lake County, Kane County, and Will County to provide written translations and oral interpretation (bilingual election judges/poll workers) in *Spanish*.

In parts of suburban Cook County, federal law requires written and oral assistance in Chinese; written assistance in Hindi; and oral assistance in Hindi, Gujarati, and Urdu. Additionally, local law in suburban Cook County also requires paper, electronic, audio, and vote by mail ballots in Korean, Tagalog, Polish, Russian, Ukrainian, Gujarati, Urdu, and Arabic.

⁸⁸ 10 ILCS 5/24-10.

⁸⁹ 10 ILCS 5/11-4.2(a).

⁹⁰ 10 ILCS 5/17-13(b).

⁹¹ 10 ILCS 5/17-14.

⁹² 10 ILCS 5/17-14.; see also *McCreery v. Burnsmier*, 293 Ill. 43, 51 (1920)

⁹³ Fed. Reg. Vol. 81 No. 233 Dec. 5, 2016, <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2016-12-05/pdf/2016-28969.pdf>.

In parts of the City of Chicago, written and oral assistance is required in Chinese; written assistance is required in Hindi; and oral assistance is required in Hindi, Gujarati, and Urdu. There might be resources for Chicago voters needing assistance in Korean and Tagalog.

In Chicago, suburban Cook County, and some other jurisdictions, even if no assistance is available in person, election judges/poll workers can call their central election office to help a voter obtain language assistance over the phone. Hotline volunteers may also refer voters to language-specific hotlines: 888-VE-Y-VOTA (Spanish), 888-API-VOTE (Asian/Pacific Islander languages), or 844-YALLA-US (Arabic).

65. **CAMPAIGNING:** What rules apply to people campaigning or “hanging around” my polling place? Can people approach me?

Electioneering and “soliciting of votes” are banned within 100 feet of all polling places.⁹⁴ The 100-foot radius should be marked with cones, a United States flag, or other markers.⁹⁵ The area within the markers is designated a “campaign free zone.”⁹⁶ Churches or private schools may designate their entire property as “campaign free.”⁹⁷

The area on polling place property that is outside of the “campaign free zone” is a public forum for the duration of time that the polling place is open, and electioneering (including placement of signs) is allowed.⁹⁸

Furthermore, “no person shall interrupt, hinder or oppose any voter while approaching within those areas for the purpose of voting.”⁹⁹

Candidates, campaigns, and partisan pollwatchers may try to pressure voters inside the polling place, but such actions are not permitted and should be reported to election judges/poll workers. Churches or private schools may designate their entire property as “campaign free.”¹⁰⁰ The area on polling place property that is outside of the “campaign free zone” is a public forum for the duration of time that the polling place is open, and electioneering (including placement of signs) is allowed.¹⁰¹

Pollwatchers (who might be there on behalf of a candidate) may not “station themselves in such close proximity to the judges of election so as to interfere with the orderly conduct of the election and shall not, in any event, be permitted to handle election materials.”¹⁰²

***Note to Election Protection field and hotline volunteers:** Notify your Captain about any reports of voter intimidation. Election Protection volunteers should try to help facilitate a safe and non-threatening environment for voting and de-escalate tensions as much as possible.

66. **CHALLENGE:** Someone is formally challenging my vote. What should I do?

⁹⁴ 10 ILCS 5/17-29

⁹⁵ *Id.*

⁹⁶ *Id.*

⁹⁷ *Id.*

⁹⁸ *Id.*

⁹⁹ *Id.*

¹⁰⁰ *Id.*

¹⁰¹ *Id.*

¹⁰² 10 ILCS 5/7-34; 10 ILCS 5/17-23

If a voter's qualifications are officially challenged, the voter may be required to produce two forms of identification showing their current residential address, which may include not more than one piece of mail addressed to the voter at their current residence address and postmarked not earlier than 30 days before the date of the election. Alternatively, voters may have a witness who is registered to vote in that precinct attest to the voter's qualifications and take an oath. The voter may then cast a regular ballot.¹⁰³ As a last resort, a voter may cast a provisional ballot. See [Question 69](#) for more information about provisional ballots.

If it seems like a particular voter or group of voters may have been targeted or challenged unfairly or repeatedly, report this issue to your Captain, so that the relevant election authorities can be alerted. Additionally, if there are concerns about voter challenges that seem to be partisan in nature or occurring repeatedly at a single polling place, please report this issue to your Captain.

67. **POLICE/MILITARY PRESENCE:** There are police/members of the military at the polling place. Is this okay? What should I do?

Polling places are in a variety of buildings, some of which may employ private security guards, may have state or local law enforcement, or may be in a police station. While the presence of law enforcement in these situations may be required by the building, voters should be able to vote without feeling intimidated. Election Protection volunteers should notify a Captain if a voter is feeling intimidated by police/security presence to navigate next steps.

Federal law prohibits military from being deployed to polling locations.¹⁰⁴ Notify a Captain immediately to navigate next steps in this situation.

***Note to Election Protection volunteer:** If you learn of members of the military at the polling place, or of voter concerns regarding guns in the polling place, notify your captain immediately.

68. **THOUGHT WAS REGISTERED:** My name isn't on the voter registration roll but I thought I was registered. What should I do?

A voter's name can be removed from the list of registered voters if the voter has failed to respond to an official election mailing AND has not voted in the past four years. If the voter has not voted in four years, the election authority must provide them with notice before taking any action; if the voter then does not respond within 30 days, their name may be removed.¹⁰⁵ Voters are also removed from the list of registered voters when they begin serving a sentence of confinement for a criminal conviction.¹⁰⁶

Occasionally, a voter's name is mistakenly removed from the rolls even though that voter may never have received proper notification of removal. If the voter would like to have their name put back on the rolls, they can send that request via letter to the election jurisdiction (such as the county clerk or Board of Elections) within two years of cancellation with documentation that they are a qualified voter; after that two-year period, they must re-register.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰³ 10 ILCS 5/17-10.

¹⁰⁴ 18 U.S.C. § 592.

¹⁰⁵ See 10 ILCS 5/5-24.

¹⁰⁶ See 10 ILCS 5/5-24; Ill. Admin. Code tit. 26, § 216.50.

¹⁰⁷ 10 ILCS 5/5-24.

If a voter's name has been removed from the rolls, suggest that the voter use Grace Period or Election Day Registration (see [Question 6](#) and [Question 7](#)) or offer to call the jurisdiction with the voter in an attempt to resolve the situation if time allows. Otherwise, provide the jurisdiction's phone number to the voter.

If it seems like a particular voter or group of voters might have been unfairly removed from the voter rolls, this issue should be reported to call center captains or the command center, so that the relevant election authorities can be alerted.

69. **PROVISIONAL BALLOT:** I have been offered a provisional ballot. What should I do?

Voters should use provisional ballots only as a last resort. Provisional ballots will be counted only if the election authority can later verify that the voter was properly registered.¹⁰⁸ Provisional ballots often will not be counted on Election Day. Inquire why the voter was offered a provisional ballot. If the voter is not correctly registered, the voter should be offered the opportunity to do Grace Period or Election Day Registration (see [Question 6](#) and [Question 7](#)) before being offered a provisional ballot.

The voter should be offered a provisional ballot only when:

- The voter's voting status has been successfully challenged;
- It is the voter's first time voting in that precinct, they did not provide identification when registering by mail, they do not have sufficient ID with them at the polling place, and they are unable to go back to retrieve ID and return to the polling place;
- There is an active dispute about whether the poll should be open at that time, for example if parties are in the process of obtaining a court order extending the time for closing the polls;
- The voter's name appears on the list of voters who voted during the early voting period, even though the voter claims not to have voted during the early voting period; or
- The voter received a vote by mail ballot but did not return the vote by mail ballot to the election authority and was not able to vote through the procedures mentioned in [Questions 34, 40, or 41](#).

Other than for these reasons, the voter should be able to cast a regular ballot. *A provisional ballot should be a last resort.* An individual found eligible to cast a provisional ballot must sign an affidavit stating that the individual is an eligible voter in the jurisdiction.

If the voter uses a provisional ballot, the voter will have 7 days to provide any necessary documentation to their local election board.¹⁰⁹

A voter who cast a provisional ballot can later check to see if their provisional ballot was counted by visiting <https://www.elections.il.gov/VotingAndRegistrationSystems/ProvisionalBallotSearch.aspx>. Chicago voters may additionally check <https://chicagoelections.com/en/provisional-information.html>.

ACCESSIBILITY/ASSISTANCE

¹⁰⁸ 10 ILCS 5/18A-5.

¹⁰⁹ 10 ILCS 5/18A-5(a)(7); 10 ILCS 5/18A-15.

70. LANGUAGE ACCESS: I am not an English speaker. What language resources are available? Can I bring someone in the booth to help me understand the ballot?

In many jurisdictions, the federal Voting Rights Act requires polling places to provide written translations and oral interpretation (i.e., bilingual election judges/poll workers) in other languages.¹¹⁰ In Illinois, the federal Voting Rights Act requires Chicago, Cook County, DuPage County, Lake County, Kane County, and Will County to provide written translations and oral interpretation (bilingual election judges/poll workers) in *Spanish*.

In parts of suburban Cook County, federal law requires written and oral assistance in Chinese; written assistance in Hindi; and oral assistance in Hindi, Gujarati, and Urdu. Additionally, local law in suburban Cook County also requires paper, electronic, audio, and vote by mail ballots in Korean, Tagalog, Polish, Russian, Ukrainian, Gujarati, Urdu, and Arabic.

In parts of the City of Chicago, written and oral assistance is required in Chinese; written assistance is required in Hindi; and oral assistance is required in Hindi, Gujarati, and Urdu. There might be resources for Chicago voters needing assistance in Korean and Tagalog.

In Chicago, suburban Cook County, and some other jurisdictions, even if no assistance is available in person, election judges/poll workers can call their central election office to help a voter obtain language assistance over the phone. Hotline volunteers may also refer voters to language-specific hotlines: 888-VE-Y-VOTA (Spanish), 888-API-VOTE (Asian/Pacific Islander languages), or 844-YALLA-US (Arabic).

71. CURBSIDE VOTING: Is curbside voting available? How do I request it?

Any voter with a disability who is unable to enter their assigned polling place because of structural features of the building, may request curbside voting.¹¹¹ The request should be made to the local election authority not later than the close of business on the day before the election.¹¹² Even without an advance request, voters and hotline volunteers should advocate that election workers provide curbside voting to the voter.

If a voter needs curbside voting assistance on Election Day, two judges of different political parties may meet the voter within 50 feet of the polling place entrance. The two judges must bring an Application for Ballot (in Chicago, “Form 14”); a ballot; a ballot marker, and a curbside privacy sleeve.¹¹³

In addition to mandatory curbside voting for voters with a disability, election authorities may (but do not have to) expand curb-side voting to apply to all voters.¹¹⁴

72. VOTER GUIDE: Can I bring a voting guide or reference notes with me into the voting booth?

Yes. Voters are allowed to bring any written or printed materials to assist them in the voting process. This includes notes, a voter’s guide, or a sample ballot, whether in hard copy or viewed on a mobile phone.

¹¹⁰ Fed. Reg. Vol. 81 No. 233 Dec. 5, 2016, <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2016-12-05/pdf/2016-28969.pdf>.

¹¹¹ 10 ILCS 5/17-13(b).

¹¹² 10 ILCS 5/7-47.1.

¹¹³ *Id.* Note that the statute states this must be provided, “weather permitting” – it is not clear what the criteria is for determining whether current weather is not permitting.

¹¹⁴ 10 ILCS 5/17-13.5.

QUESTIONS

73. **QUESTIONS:** Who should I contact if I have questions about any of the above?

Voters should call the 866-OUR-VOTE hotline or contact their local election authority with questions. Contact information for Illinois election jurisdictions can be found at www.elections.il.gov.

Voters can also use these bilingual hotlines: 888-VE-Y-VOTA (Spanish), 888-API-VOTE (Asian/Pacific Islander languages), or 844-YALLA-US (Arabic).