

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

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.

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1. Am I registered to vote?

You can determine whether a voter is registered to vote by checking the New York State Board of Elections website (<https://voterlookup.elections.state.ny.us>). Because of the terms of use on that site, please ask the voter for permission to look up her record in the state voter registration database.

2. Where do I vote?

You can determine a voter’s proper polling place by checking:

- In New York City: <http://vote.nyc.ny.us/html/voters/voters.shtml>
- For the rest of the state: the Get to the Polls tool at <https://voterlookup.elections.state.ny.us/>

If a voter has moved recently but has *not* updated her voter registration, refer to [Question #6](#).

3. What time do the polls open and close?

Primary Elections:

- 6:00am – 9:00pm for New York City, and the following counties: Nassau, Suffolk, Westchester, Rockland, Orange, Putnam, Dutchess and Erie.¹
- 12:00pm (noon) – 9:00pm for counties other than those specified above.²

General Elections: 6:00am – 9:00pm statewide.³

Any eligible voter in line or inside the polling place by 9:00 p.m. must be allowed to vote.⁴ If you are a hotline volunteer or a field volunteer and learn that a polling place is not open on time, or prohibits those who were in line before 9:00 pm from voting, advise voters to stay at the polling location and contact your hotline captain/command center, who should call the local county election official.

4. When is/was the voter registration deadline?

The registration deadline for the June primary election was June 1, 2018. A voter registration application that was mailed must have been postmarked by this deadline and received by a board of elections by June 6 in order for the voter to be eligible to vote in the June primary election.⁵

The registration deadline for the September primary election was August 19, 2018. A voter registration application that was mailed must have been postmarked by this deadline and received by a board of elections by August 24 in order for the voter to be eligible to vote in the September primary election.⁶

The registration deadline for the November general election is October 12, 2018. A voter registration application that is mailed must be postmarked by this deadline and received by a board of elections by October 17 in order for the voter to be eligible to vote in the November general election.⁷

5. Can I vote without providing identification?

Yes, most voters in New York are *not* required to provide any identification. But a voter must provide poll inspectors with her name and address of residence, and sign her name on the back of her registration poll record.⁸

The *only condition* under which a voter will be required to provide ID is if she is a first-time voter who registered by mail, and her identifying information (driver's license number, state identification number, or last four digits of social security number) has not been verified by the state.⁹ In this case, a voter may provide any of the following IDs:

- A current driver's license or a DMV non-driver photo ID or other current and valid photo identification (e.g., student ID, passport), or
- A copy of a current utility bill, bank statement, government check, paycheck or other government document that shows the name and address of the voter.¹⁰

If the voter does not produce the above forms of identification, the voter can vote by affidavit (provisional) ballot. However, you should encourage first-time voters who registered by mail to fetch an ID instead of casting an affidavit ballot. If an ID is not provided on Election Day, but is otherwise required before the election is certified, the affidavit ballot will not be counted. If the voter uses an affidavit ballot, she should be provided with a piece of paper containing information about whatever next steps she needs to take to have her affidavit ballot counted, and how to track whether it is counted.

A voter who proclaims a change in name should be permitted to vote in the same manner as other voters, unless challenged on other grounds.¹¹

6. I moved but I didn’t update my voter registration, can I vote?

If a voter has moved and the voter registration deadline has not yet passed, the voter should register to vote at her *new* address. Registration information can be found [here](#). If the voter did not update her registration information by the deadline, the answer to this question depends on *where* the voter moved:

Moved within the same precinct/election district	Moved to a different precinct/ election district but within the same county (or within New York City)	Moved to a different county
<p>The voter should go to her correct polling place (which will be the same for the old and new address) and provide the poll worker with her new address. The voter should be able to vote with a regular ballot.¹²</p> <p>The voter’s election district/assembly district can be found by looking up her voter registration on the Voter Registration Search website (https://voterlookup.elections.state.ny.us/) or by entering her address on the PollSite Locator (https://nyc.pollsitelocator.com/search).</p>	<p>A voter who moved within NYC (even across boroughs) or within the same county should cast an affidavit (provisional) ballot at her <i>new</i> polling place. The affidavit ballot should be counted, and the voter’s change in address should be entered.¹³</p> <p>The voter’s election district/assembly district can be found by looking up her voter registration on the Voter Registration Search website (https://voterlookup.elections.state.ny.us/) or by entering her address on the PollSite Locator (https://nyc.pollsitelocator.com/search).</p>	<p>If a voter moved between boroughs in NYC, see the “within the same county” column to the left.</p> <p>A voter who moved from one county to another (within New York or to another state) in the 30 days prior to the election, is only eligible to vote for president and vice president, not a full ballot.¹⁴</p> <p>Encourage such a voter to register with the new address as soon as possible to ensure she can vote in the next election.¹⁵</p>

7. What should I do if there are equipment problems at my precinct/election district?

Voters should immediately notify the election officers if the voting equipment breaks down. If the problem cannot be fixed in a timely manner, a voter should ask if an emergency paper ballot is available.¹⁶ If voting equipment is not functional, contact your hotline captain or command center. They will then contact local elections officials to attempt to resolve the issue.

Emergency ballots shall be used if: there are equipment problems; official ballots are not delivered, or are lost, destroyed, or stolen; or if the supply of official ballots runs out.¹⁷ The inspectors of elections may (but are not required) to use emergency paper ballots during the first hour of a breakdown. If all machines are broken down for more than one hour, inspectors of elections are *required* to use emergency paper ballots.¹⁸ Emergency ballots are different from affidavit (provisional) ballots, so if the poll workers do not know the difference or are not offering emergency paper ballots, contact your Hotline Captain or Command Center.

8. I am a registered voter who is not on the rolls at the precinct/election district where I currently am. Can I vote where I am?

Verify that the voter is registered to vote in this election and at the correct polling place (and election district/table within the polling place) at <https://voterlookup.elections.state.ny.us/>. (The election district can also be found at <https://nyc.pollsitelocator.com/search>.) If the voter is registered, and is in New York City, make sure that the poll worker has checked both the regular poll book as well as the *supplemental poll book*, which is for voters whose registrations were processed after the regular poll books were printed. Not all polling places will have supplemental books, but it is important to check.

If the voter's record in the state database indicates that she is "inactive," her name may not appear on the poll book at her polling place. However, the voter can cast an affidavit ballot, which should be counted in subsequent days and the voter should be returned to "active" status.¹⁹

If the voter's name is still not found, but she is confident that she registered to vote by the deadline (by October 12, 2018 for the November 6, 2018 general election), flag your captain or call your command center for help. Such a voter has two options:

1. Go before a judge, who has the authority to order that the voter be given a regular ballot. These judges are typically at the [county boards of elections](#) office, but call the county with, or on behalf of, the voter to confirm before sending her there. The voter would have to make her case to the judge. Consult with your captain, who may be able to provide more details on the process and will know if there is an Election Protection volunteer on site at the board to help the voter through the process. OR
2. Vote with an affidavit ballot.²⁰ As long as the voter is registered to vote at that polling place (even if it turns out to be the wrong election district), the affidavit ballot should be counted for the offices the voter is eligible to vote for.²¹ However, a ballot cast in the wrong polling place (where the voter is not registered) will not be counted.²² If the voter has to cast an affidavit ballot, let her know that the poll worker should give her a piece of paper with a website and/or phone number she can use to find out whether her affidavit ballot was counted. (Link not available at time of publication but you can check the [Board of Elections website](#) to see if you can provide the voter with the link.)

9. My name isn't popping up on the list of registered voters—could it have been removed?

If the voter's record in the state database (<https://voterlookup.elections.state.ny.us/>) indicates that she is "inactive," her name may not appear in the poll book at her polling place, but she is still registered to vote. Such a voter can cast an affidavit ballot that should be counted in subsequent days, and the voter should be returned to "active" status.²³

A voter's name can *only* be removed from the state database of registered voters for any of the following:²⁴

- The voter has moved outside the city or county in which she was registered,
- The voter has been convicted of a felony disqualifying her from voting,
- The voter has been adjudged an incompetent,
- The voter has refused to take a challenge oath,
- The voter has died,
- The voter has personally asked to have her name removed,
- The voter is otherwise no longer qualified to vote, or

- The voter has been sent a mailing about her inactive voting registration status and has not replied within two federal elections. A registered voter enters inactive status when she fails to respond to a residence confirmation notice.²⁵

A voter whose name was removed for any of the above reasons, but is eligible to vote, *must reregister* to have her name restored to the statewide voter registration system.

If the voter has not previously voted, verify that she is [eligible](#) to register and vote, as her application may have been rejected for one of those reasons (criteria at the link above). If the voter’s name has been removed from the rolls and the voter registration deadline has passed, offer to call the jurisdiction with the voter in an attempt to resolve the situation (if time allows). Otherwise, provide the jurisdiction’s election office phone number to the voter.

10. I have a criminal conviction. Can I vote?

A citizen cannot vote in New York if convicted of a felony and currently serving a sentence of imprisonment or parole.²⁶ After completing a prison and/or parole sentence, an individual must reregister to vote. Citizens who are on probation, however, retain their right to vote.

In April 2018, the Governor signed an Executive Order that anticipated granting conditional pardons to individuals under parole supervision to restore voting rights (“voting restoration pardons”).²⁷ Parole officers generally hand deliver voting restoration pardons to individuals under their supervision, along with a voter registration form and location of the voter registration office. The [Parolee Lookup](#) feature of the New York Department of Corrections and Community Supervision (“DOCCS”) website can be used to identify whether a parolee has received a voting registration pardon. A parolee who has received a voting restoration pardon must be registered to vote.

11. I have been offered an affidavit (provisional) ballot. What should I do?

Inquire why the voter was offered an affidavit ballot. A voter should be offered an affidavit ballot only when²⁸:

- The voter’s name does not appear on the voter rolls and her eligibility to vote cannot otherwise be established;
- The voter’s eligibility to vote has been challenged by a poll watcher or another voter; or
- A first-time voter has not produced appropriate ID either when registering or at the polls.²⁹

Otherwise, the voter should be able to cast a regular ballot. *An affidavit ballot should be a last resort.* If used, a poll worker must then provide the voter with a phone number or website to check whether the affidavit ballot was counted.

12. I am a college student. Can I register to vote where I go to school?

Yes. College students who meet the registration requirements may register to vote where they go to school so long as they legitimately consider the location of their college to be the place where they maintain a fixed, permanent and principal home, to which they, wherever temporarily located, always intend to return.³⁰

If a student has been turned away at the polls, verify that she was registered to vote in that location by the deadline (See [Question 4](#)). If so, contact your hotline captain or command center.

13. I am physically disabled and need assistance. Will my polling place be accessible?

Federal and New York law require that each polling place be accessible to physically disabled voters.³¹ Additionally, at least one machine in each election district must be accessible to persons with disabilities.³² If a voter reports that a polling place is not accessible or that there is no machine for persons with disabilities, contact your hotline captain or command center. A physically disabled voter whose polling place is located in a building that is not accessible shall be entitled to vote in any other election district at a polling place located in a building which is accessible.³³

14. I am blind, physically disabled, or cannot read English, and require assistance in order to vote. Can I get assistance at the polls?

A voter requiring assistance at the polls for any of these reasons can take a person of her own choice (excluding an employer, an agent of an employer, or an officer or agent of her union), or two election officials of different political parties, into the voting booth.³⁴ If a poll worker refuses to allow a voter with a disability or limited English proficiency to bring a person of her choice into the voting booth, contact your hotline captain or command center.

Several [counties/boroughs](#) should provide ballots and other voting materials in Spanish, Chinese, Korean and/or Bengali, so take note if those are not offered or provided, but needed.³⁵

15. I don't know how to use the voting equipment. Can I get help?

Each polling place shall contain an imitation voting machine. ³⁶ Upon request, voters shall be instructed in the machine's use. After entering, but before closing the voting machine booth, a voter may ask for further instruction. Two polling place inspectors of opposite political parties may enter the booth and provide further instruction.

16. Can I vote absentee or in person before Election Day?

Absentee voting allows some registered voters to vote by mail or in person at their county [Board of Elections](#) office before Election Day. A qualified voter may only vote absentee if she expects to be:

- Absent from her registered county on Election Day;
- Unable to vote in person due to illness or physical disability, care of another who is ill or physically disabled, or she is or will be a patient in a hospital;
- An inmate or patient of a veteran's administration hospital; or
- In jail awaiting action by a grand jury or trial, or in prison after a conviction for an offense other than a felony, provided that she is qualified to vote in the election district of her residence.³⁷

Applying for absentee ballots:³⁸

DEADLINES FOR STATE AND LOCAL PRIMARY ELECTION

Date	Deadline Information
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Sept. 6	Last day to postmark an application or letter of application by mail for an absentee ballot.
Sept. 12	Last day to apply IN-PERSON for absentee ballot.
Sept. 12	Last day to postmark ballot. Must be received by the local board of elections no later than Sept. 20th.
Sept. 13	Last day to deliver ballot IN-PERSON to the local board of elections (by someone other than the voter).

DEADLINES FOR GENERAL ELECTION

Date	Deadline Information
Oct. 30	Last day to postmark an application or letter of application by mail for an absentee ballot.
Nov. 5	Last day to apply IN-PERSON for absentee ballot.
Nov. 5	Last day to postmark ballot. Must be received by the local board of elections no later than Nov. 15th. Military Voter Ballots must be received no later than Nov. 21st.
Nov. 6	Last day to deliver ballot IN-PERSON to the local board of elections (by someone other than the voter).

- However, if the voter is mailing the application, encourage her to do so as soon as possible, as the Postal Service has made processing changes that may slow mail delivery, in comparison to previous years.
- The voter will be sent her absentee ballot at least 32 days before an election.³⁹ If a voter applies with fewer than 32 days remaining before the election, her ballot will be sent immediately after her application is received and processed.
- To vote by absentee ballot, a voter must mail or deliver a request for one to the county Board of Elections.⁴⁰ This may be done via the official application (which can be picked up at the [County Board of Elections’](#) office), online (<http://www.elections.ny.gov/VotingAbsentee.html>), or by mailing a letter with the following information:
 - Name,
 - Address on voter registration,
 - Mailing address (if different),
 - Reason for voting absentee, and
 - Signature.

NYC residents can also call 1-866-VOTE-NYC and request an application.

If a voter cannot pick up her ballot, or will not be able to receive it through the mail, the voter has the right to designate someone to pick it up for her. Only that person designated on the voter’s application may pick up and deliver the voter’s ballot.⁴¹

Deadline to cast absentee ballots: The board of elections *must receive* a voter’s absentee ballot **before the close of polls on Election Day.**⁴² If a voter requests an absentee ballot by letter rather than the official application, she must complete the application and send it along with her ballot in order for the ballot to be counted.⁴³

17. What if I requested an absentee ballot but I want to vote in person on Election Day?

An individual may still vote in person. If the individual votes in person after submitting an absentee ballot, the absentee ballot will be set aside.⁴⁴

18. Does my state have same-day registration? If so, what is the process?

No. A voter must have applied to register to vote prior to the deadline (See [Question 4](#)).

19. How can I get a ride to the polls?

We are not aware of any non-partisan efforts to provide voters with rides to the polls. However, local political parties, candidates, or interest groups may provide such services. Advise voters to consider inquiring about ride services with candidates, parties, or interests that they support.

20. What rules apply to people campaigning or “hanging around” my polling place? Can people approach me?

Voters are entitled to vote free from duress or intimidation.⁴⁵ Specifically, New York law forbids electioneering—urging or soliciting voters to cast their ballots one way or another—within one hundred feet of the entrances to any polling place.⁴⁶ It is also unlawful for anyone to willingly obstruct or delay a voter on the way to her polling place or on her way to register.⁴⁷ And no one is allowed to enter a voter’s voting booth without authorization.⁴⁸ So to this extent, voters should be free from being approached or bothered while voting.

Additionally, only election officers (e.g., poll clerks, election inspectors, election coordinators) may take, receive, or view a voter’s ballot.⁴⁹ It is unlawful for anyone to induce these officers to violate any of their duties, and it is unlawful for any non-officer to wear anything that falsely identifies them as an officer.⁵⁰ Election officers themselves, may not refuse voters any of their rights or electioneer.⁵¹

Having said that, there can be some people “hanging around,” as New York law permits the presence of certified poll watchers. *Poll watchers must have a written certificate* from the candidate, chairperson of a political committee, or chairperson of the independent body they are working for to enter a poll site.⁵² Further, they must be qualified voters of the city or county in which they are serving.⁵³ No more than three poll watchers per candidate, political committee, or independent body are allowed at a poll site; only one of which is allowed within the guard rail at a time. Poll watchers may not interfere with the election process in any way.⁵⁴

21. Someone is formally challenging my right to vote. What do I do?

A voter’s qualification to vote may be challenged by an inspector or clerk, any duly appointed watcher, or by any registered voter properly in the polling place.⁵⁵

If a voter’s qualification to vote is challenged, *she may still vote*. An election officer should ask her to take the “preliminary oath,” requiring her to fully and truthfully answer questions regarding her qualifications to vote.⁵⁶ At this point, she should be allowed to vote, unless the officer finds any of the voter’s answers deficient.⁵⁷

If the officer finds any of the voter's answers deficient, then the officer should have the voter take the "Qualification Oath." The Oath has the voter swear to her qualifications to vote.⁵⁸ *At this point, she should be allowed to vote.*

Challenges on other grounds: if a voter is challenged based on felony status, she will be asked to take "The Conviction Oath."⁵⁹ Regardless of the grounds, if the voter is administered an oath, she may refuse to take it, but to vote, she must.⁶⁰ As a last resort, she may vote with an affidavit ballot.

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- 1 N.Y. Elec. Law § 8-100(2).
 - 2 N.Y. Elec. Law § 8-100(2).
 - 3 N.Y. Elec. Law § 8-100(2).
 - 4 N.Y. Elec. Law § 8-104(5).
 - 5 See N.Y. Elec. Law § 5-210(3).
 - 6 See N.Y. Elec. Law § 5-210(3).
 - 7 See N.Y. Elec. Law § 5-210(3).
 - 8 N.Y. Elec. Law § 8-304(1).
 - 9 N.Y. Elec. Law § 8-303.
 - 10 N.Y. Elec. Law §§ 8-302(2-a), 8-302(3)(b), 8-302(3)(c).
 - 11 N.Y. Elec. Law § 8-302(3)(c).
 - 12 N.Y. Elec. Law § 8-302.
 - 13 N.Y. Elec. Law § 8-302(3)(e)(ii); Individual conversation with New York State Board of Elections office on April 18, 2016.
 - 14 See 52 U.S.C. § 10502(e).
 - 15 N.Y. Elec. Law § 8-302; Individual conversation with New York Board of Elections (September 16, 2015).
 - 16 N.Y. Elec. Law § 7-120.
 - 17 N.Y. Elec. Law § 7-120.
 - 18 N.Y. Elec. Law § 7-120.
 - 19 N.Y. Elec. Law § 5-213.
 - 20 N.Y. Elec. Law § 8-302(3)(e)(ii).
 - 21 N.Y. Elec. Law § 9-209(2)(E)(iii).
 - 22 N.Y. Elec. Law § 9-209(2)(E)(iii).
 - 23 N.Y. Elec. Law § 5-213.
 - 24 N.Y. Elec. Law § 5-400(1).
 - 25 See N.Y. Elec. Law § 1-104(37).
 - 26 N.Y. Elec. Law § 5-106.
 - 27 N.Y. Exec. Order No. 181 (April 18, 2018),
https://www.governor.ny.gov/sites/governor.ny.gov/files/atoms/files/EO_181.pdf.
 - 28 See N.Y. Elec. Law § 8-302(3)(e).
 - 29 N.Y. Elec. Law § 8-302(2-a)(c).
 - 30 N.Y. Elec. Law §§ 1-104(22), 5-102.
 - 31 See N.Y. Elec. Law § 4-104(1-a); Help America Vote Act § 301, 52 U.S.C. A. § 21081(a)(3) (West).
 - 32 N.Y. Elec. Law §§ 4-104(1-a), 7-202(2); *see also* Help America Vote Act § 301, 52 U.S.C. A. § 21081(a)(3) (West).
 - 33 N.Y. Elec. Law § 5-601(1).
 - 34 N.Y. Elec. Law § 8-306.
 - 35 <https://ag.ny.gov/civil-rights/voting-rights>
 - 36 N.Y. Elec. Law § 8-306(7); *see also* 28 C.F.R. §§ 55.3-55.10.
 - 37 N.Y. Elec. Law § 8-400.
 - 38 <http://www.elections.ny.gov/VotingDeadlines.html#AbsenteeDeadlines>
 - 39 <http://www.elections.ny.gov/NYSBOE/download/voting/Absentee06152010.pdf>
 - 40 <http://www.elections.ny.gov/VotingAbsentee.html>
 - 41 <http://www.elections.ny.gov/VotingAbsentee.html>
 - 42 N.Y. Elec. Law § 8-412(1).
 - 43 N.Y. Elec. Law § 8-412(1).
 - 44 See N.Y. Elec. Law § 9-209(2)(a)(i)(A).
 - 45 See N.Y. Elec. Law § 17-150.

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- 46 N.Y. Elec. Law § 17-130(4).
47 N.Y. Elec. Law § 17-130(3).
48 *See* N.Y. Elec. Law §§ 17-130(7)-(9).
49 *See* N.Y. Elec. Law §§ 17-130(10)-(15).
50 N.Y. Elec. Law § 17-130(23).
51 *See* N.Y. Elec. Law § 17-106.
52 N.Y. Elec. Law §§ 5-206(1), 8-500(1).
53 N.Y. Elec. Law §§ 5-206(2), 8-500(4).
54 *See* N.Y. Elec. Law § 17-130.
55 N.Y. Elec. Law § 8-502.
56 N.Y. Elec. Law § 8-504(1).
57 N.Y. Elec. Law § 8-504(2).
58 N.Y. Elec. Law § 8-504(3).
59 N.Y. Elec. Law § 8-504(5).
60 N.Y. Elec. Law § 8-504(7).