

Frequently Asked Questions

Iowa – General Election 2024

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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.

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REGISTERING TO VOTE

1. **ELIGIBILITY:** Can I register to vote?

Generally yes, an individual is eligible to vote in Iowa *even if* he or she moves to Iowa *on Election Day* so long as the voter is (1) a U.S. Citizen, (2) an Iowa resident, and (3) at least 17 years old as long as they will be 18 at the time of the election¹; and so long as the voter is NOT (1) a convicted felon [unless voting rights were restored], (2) judged mentally incompetent to vote, or (3) claims the right to vote in any other place². Seventeen year olds may register so long as they will be 18 by the November General Election.

¹ Iowa Code Ann. § 48A.5.

² Iowa Code Ann. § 48A.6.

2. **PRIMARY ELECTION:** Can I vote in the primary election? Do I need to be registered with a political party? Can I change my party registration to vote in another party's primary election? When I voted, the poll worker asked my party affiliation. Are they allowed to do that?

To vote in a Primary Election in Iowa, the voter must be registered with the party and must not receive any other primary ballot for any other party or affiliation.³ However, a voter may change their party registration or affiliation prior to the primary election⁴ or on primary election day.⁵ As part of that process, a poll worker will ask for a primary voter's party affiliation. Seventeen year olds may vote in the Primary so long as they will be 18 by the November General Election.

3. **STATUS:** Am I registered to vote?

Voters can determine whether they are registered to vote by checking the Iowa Secretary of State's website at [Am I Registered to Vote in Iowa?](#) If not registered, they may register on election day at the polling place.

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

Voters may "pre-register" or update their registration up to the 15th day before the election (October 21 for the November 5, 2024 General Election). To pre-register online, voters must have an Iowa driver's license or state ID. Voters may also use a paper form. The form may be obtained from the [County Auditor](#) or downloaded at [voteapp.pdf](#). It must be returned to the County Auditor no later than 15 days before the election or, if mailed, be postmarked by that date. Voters may also register at driver's license stations. More information on how to preregister can be found at [Voter Pre-Registration](#).

Iowa also provides same-day registration. While pre-registration will expedite the voting process, voters may register or update their registration at their precinct on Election Day.⁶ See [Question 7](#).

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

The online Iowa voter registration requires an Iowa driver's license number or an Iowa non-operator ID number, and the last **five** digits of the voter's social security number. A paper registration form requires either a driver's license or state ID number or the last four digits of the voter's social security number.

For ID necessary to vote, see [Question 15](#).

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?

The pre-registration deadline is 15 days before the Election (October 21 for the November 5, 2024 General Election). Mailed applications must be postmarked by this date and online and hand delivered applications must be received by this date.⁷

³ Iowa Code Ann. § 43.38.

⁴ Iowa Code Ann. § 43.41.

⁵ Iowa Code Ann. § 43.42.

⁶ Iowa Code Ann. § 48A.7A.

⁷ Iowa Code Ann. § 48A.9.

7. **SAME DAY:** Does my state have Same Day Registration? If so, what is the process?

Yes, Iowa also provides same-day registration.⁸ A voter who has not pre-registered may register on Election Day by appearing at the precinct in which the voter resides and completing a voter registration application, making a written oath, and providing proof of identity and residence. See [Question 19](#) for how to prove identity and residence.

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

Generally yes. Voters who have moved and have not updated their voter registration should go to the polling place associated with their **new address**. Voters who have moved within the same county will be asked to update their registration and those who have moved to a new county will be asked to re-register (same day). In both cases besides showing ID they will have to supply proof of residence if their ID does not show their new address. See [Updating Your Voter Registration](#).

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

If voters cannot return to the precinct for their permanent address on election day or vote early in-person, they may request an absentee ballot be mailed to them.

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?

A student may choose to register to vote at either the student's home address or at their school address.⁹ Student's may change their registered address to the other location and if not at their registered address may request an absentee ballot. More information can be found at [College Student Voters](#). Students attending school in Iowa will be able to use same-day registration.

11. **LIVING ABROAD:** I am living abroad and/or serving in the military. How can I register and/or vote?

Members serving in the military and their spouses who are outside their county and citizens residing abroad may register and vote by mail as any other voter. But they may also take advantage of special rules when voting in federal elections. The residence for voting purposes is the voter's last registered address or their last address before leaving the U.S. or enlisting. This includes citizens who were not old enough to register to vote at the time they left the country. More information can be found at the [Federal Voter Assistance Program](#).

Registering and Requesting an Absentee Ballot: Military and voters living abroad can register to vote and request an absentee ballot by completing a federal postcard application ([FPCA](#)), and submitting it to their County Auditor or emailing it to uocava@sos.iowa.gov. The normal pre-registration deadlines do not apply. Voters may request the ballot by mail, email or fax. The ballot request must be received by the close of business on November 4, 2024 (day before the General Election). If requesting a ballot by mail the request should be made early enough for the voter to receive the ballot in time to vote. For the general election only, the voter's spouse, parent, parent-in-law, adult child or sibling, provided they live in the voter's County, may submit a proxy request for a ballot on behalf of the voter. More information can be found at [Register to Vote and Request an Absentee Ballot](#). **Note: An absentee ballot**

⁸ Iowa Code Ann. § 48A.7A.

⁹ Iowa Code Ann. § 48A.5A(5).

can be requested even though it is clear that it will not arrive in time and the Federal write-in Ballot (below) immediately voted and returned.

Returning an Absentee Ballot: Military personnel who are outside the country and non-military citizens who are located in an area designated as an “imminent danger pay area” by the U.S. Department of Defense may return the voted ballot by mail, email or FAX. Others must return the ballot by mail. The deadline for returning the ballot depends on the method: return by mail must be postmarked by the day before election day and received by noon on the Monday following the election, and return by online/fax must be received by 8:00 pm CT on Election Day (November 5, 2024).

Ballot Not Received: Where the requested absentee ballot has not been received in time to meet these deadlines, voters may use the Federal Write-in Absentee ballot ([FWAB](#)). This is a back-up ballot that contains no names of candidates or offices. The voter enters the office and person being voted for on the blank form. It should be submitted as soon as it becomes evident that the absentee ballot may not be received in time. If the absentee ballot is subsequently received it should be voted as well. For more information on Military and Overseas voting see the Secretary of State’s [website](#).

12. CRIMINAL CONVICTION: [I have a felony criminal conviction. Can I register to vote? Does the type of conviction matter? Are there any restrictions after any misdemeanor convictions?](#)

Misdemeanor convictions and deferred judgments (individuals who were given a deferred judgment for a felony and who are on probation or successfully discharged probation) have no effect on voting rights.

On August 5, 2020, the Governor issued an [executive order](#) that restored voting rights to most felons who have completed their terms of incarceration, probation, parole, or special sentence.¹⁰ Individuals whose rights were restored by the executive order will need to register to vote at their current residential addresses. They need not have paid fines, court costs or restitution. More information can be found at [Restored Voting](#).

The exception is for felony convictions under chapter 707 of the Iowa Code (homicide and related crimes, including some abortion related crimes). Their voting rights are not automatically restored. Instead, they must apply to the Governor for restoration of voting rights.¹¹ Individuals with felony convictions under Chapter 707 may be eligible to have their voting rights restored once they have discharged probation and parole and completed repayment of court costs, restitution, and fines or must be on a payment plan.¹² See the Governor’s [website](#) or Campaign Legal [Restore Your Vote](#) for latest information.

13. INCARCERATED: [I am currently incarcerated. Can I register to vote? Can I vote from jail?](#)

Persons incarcerated while awaiting trial or for a misdemeanor conviction can request an absentee ballot and vote unless they also have a felony conviction for which their rights have not been restored.¹³

14. REGISTRATION CHALLENGED: [My registration has been challenged, what should I do?](#)

See [Question 72](#).

¹⁰ [Voting Rights Restoration | Office of the Governor of Iowa](#); Iowa Secretary of State, [Restored Voting](#); See also [Voting Rights Restoration Efforts in Iowa | Brennan Center for Justice](#).

¹¹ [Iowa Secretary of State](#) - Voting Rights.

¹² *Id.*

¹³ See [Voting in Iowa After a Criminal Conviction | ACLU of Iowa \(aclu-ia.org\)](#).

HOW TO VOTE: ELECTION DAY

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

Polls are open from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Central Time on Election Day.

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

Voters can determine their proper polling place by checking the Iowa Secretary of State's website ([Find Your Polling Place](#)). Voters who have moved should go to the precinct for the new location.

17. **TIME OFF WORK:** Is my employer required to give me time off to vote? Is it paid or unpaid?

Voters who do not have two consecutive hours when they are not required to be at work during the time between when the polls open and close on election day are entitled to up to two hours of paid time off from work to vote. Voters must make an individual written request for time off to vote to their employer before election day. The employer can designate the period of time the voter will be allowed to leave work to vote.

A voter cannot be penalized and deductions cannot be made from the voter's regular salary or wages on account of this absence.

Example: An employee works from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and wishes to vote at an election where the polls are open from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. The employee would not be entitled to time off work to vote in this instance because the employee has four consecutive hours (4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.) that the employee is not required to be at work while the polls are open.

However, if the employee works from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m., the employee would be entitled to time off work to vote since the employee has only one consecutive hour off work while the polls are open.¹⁴

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

A voter who is on the premises of the polling place by 8:00 p.m. must be allowed to vote.

19. **IDENTIFICATION:** What identification is required to vote?

Proof of Identity: Voters in Iowa will be asked to show one of the following forms of identification at the polls. It must contain a photo, be current, and have a valid expiration date. See [here](#):

- Iowa Driver's License or Non-Operator ID (may be expired up to 90 days except same day registrants)
- Out of State Driver's License or Non-Operator ID
- U.S. Military ID or Veteran ID
- U.S. Passport

¹⁴ Iowa Code Ann. § 49.109.

- ID card issued by employe
- Student ID issued by Iowa high school or college
- Tribal ID Card/Document (not expired with photo and signed)
- Iowa Voter Identification Card (signed)

An **Iowa Voter Identification Card** will be mailed automatically to all registrants following registration who do not appear in the Iowa Department of Transportation's Driver's License or Non-Operator ID files are automatically mailed an Iowa Voter Identification Card at the time of registration. However, any voter may request a Card from their [County Auditor](#).

Proof of Residence: Same day registrants, those who registered by mail, and those who have changed their address must also prove where they live. If the voter's photo ID does not contain their current address, they may use another document to prove where they live if it contains their name and current address and is current within 45 days. The following are acceptable proofs of residence (electronic versions are acceptable):

- Residential lease
- Utility bill (including a cell phone bill)
- Bank statement
- Paycheck
- Government check or other government document
- Property Tax Statement

More information on acceptable ID can be found at [Voter Registration FAQ](#).

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

A voter without one of the above listed forms of ID may have the voter's identity attested to by another registered voter in the precinct. Voters without the necessary ID or an attester will be offered a provisional ballot, but must provide ID by no later than noon on the Monday following the election for it to be counted.¹⁵

21. **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?*

Voters can only vote in the precinct where they reside. Voters should verify that they are at the [correct precinct](#). If they are at the correct location, they should

- (1) Check their status using the registration lookup tool at [Am I Registered to Vote?](#) and
- (2) Ask poll officials to check with the [County Auditor's](#) office.

If it still appears that the voter is not registered, the voter can use Same Day Registration to cast a ballot.¹⁶

Voters whose names are not on the rolls at the precinct and who do not have the necessary documentation with them to register may request a provisional ballot but will need to provide

¹⁵ Iowa Code Ann. § 49.81.

¹⁶ Iowa Code Ann. § 49.77.3.

documentation following the election.¹⁷ However, if a voter casts a provisional ballot in a precinct where they are not registered, their vote will not be counted.¹⁸

22. GIVEN PROVISIONAL BALLOT: I am being told I have to vote provisionally, what does that mean?

A provisional ballot is used by voters whose qualifications to vote have been challenged, voters who cannot prove they are qualified to vote, and voters who requested absentee ballots but did not surrender them at the polls. When a voter casts a provisional ballot, they participate in the election and defer the eligibility concerns to be addressed later. If, after the election, election officials determine that the voter is eligible to vote, the provisional ballot will be counted.¹⁹ For information concerning provisional ballots see [Election Day FAQ](#).

23. REQUESTING PROVISIONAL BALLOT: I am being told I can't vote, can I vote provisionally?

Voters without the requisite ID or attester or not on the voter registration rolls of their precinct can still vote by provisional ballot. Those voting by provisional ballot must provide ID by no later than noon on the Monday following the election, or if the law authorizing the election specifies that the supervisors canvass the votes earlier than the Monday following the election, the proof must be received by the commissioner before the canvass for that election by the board of supervisors.²⁰

24. PROVISIONAL BALLOT NEXT STEPS: I voted a provisional ballot, what now?

Depending upon the reason for the provisional ballot, they may need to provide evidence showing why they are eligible to vote to the precinct election officials or to the County Auditor's office by the deadline listed on the provisional ballot envelope. The voter will receive at the polling place a statement explaining the exact steps they must take so that their ballot may be counted. If a voter's provisional ballot is not counted, the voter will receive a letter in the mail explaining why it was not counted.²¹

If a voter has additional questions regarding their provisional ballot, they should contact their [County Auditor's](#) office.

HOW TO VOTE: IN-PERSON EARLY **VOTING** **(in this state defined as: absentee voting in person)**

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

¹⁷ Iowa Code Ann. § 49.77.3(a); *see also* Iowa Code Ann. § 49.81.

¹⁸ Iowa Code Ann. § 53.25.

¹⁹ Iowa Code Ann. § 49.81.

²⁰ Iowa Code Ann. § 49.81.

²¹ Iowa Code Ann. § 49.81;.

Yes, Iowa voters can vote early in person (“absentee voting in person”).

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

No. Iowa allows all registered voters to vote early.

27. WHEN: When does early voting begin/end?

The period for absentee in-person voting runs from 20 days prior to the election – Wednesday, October 16, 2024 to the day preceding Election Day – Monday, November 4, 2024, but dates and hours may vary with the county. For the locations and hours see [county website](#).

28. WHERE: Where do I vote during early voting?

Early voting takes place at the County Auditor’s office. Some counties also establish satellite early voting locations. Voters may vote at any early voting location in their county. For the locations and hours of early voting, see the [county’s website](#).

29. IDENTIFICATION: What identification is required for early voting? What if I don’t have an ID?

Early voters are required to present the same ID as for election day voting. See [Question 19](#).

30. ASSISTANCE: What if I need assistance voting early in person?

See [Questions 76-81](#).

HOW TO VOTE: VOTE BY MAIL

(in this state defined as: absentee voting by mail)

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

Generally, no. Voters must request an absentee ballot for each election if they wish to vote by mail. An exception is for overseas and Military, who may use the Federal Post Card application to request ballots for the entire calendar year. See [Question 11](#).

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

No. Iowa offers no-excuses absentee voting by mail.

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

The request to vote absentee by mail in ballot must be received in the [County Auditor's](#) office by 5:00 p.m. 15 days before the election (October 21, 2024 for the November 5, 2024 General Election).²²

The Application may be submitted via email or fax (useful if near the deadline) and a ballot will be mailed to the voter. However, for the ballot to be counted the voter must also mail in or drop off the original paper ballot request. Applications may begin to be filed with the County Auditor no earlier than 70 days prior to the election – August 27, 2024 for the General Election.

34. APPLICATION ASSISTANCE: [Can someone assist me with filling out the application?](#)

A voter may ask for assistance and have someone sign the application on the voter's behalf as long as it is done in the voter's presence and with the voter's permission. See [Absentee Voting FAQ](#).

35. 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?](#)

Registered voters can request to receive an absentee ballot by mail by completing an [absentee ballot request form](#) and returning it by mail or by hand to the [County Auditor's](#) office. They may **not** be requested on-line. More information about absentee voting by mail can be found at [Absentee Voting](#) and [Absentee Voting FAQ](#).

36. IDENTIFICATION: [Are there identification requirements when I return my mail-in ballot application and/or ballot?](#)

No, ID is not required to return the mail ballot. However, the application must have provided the voter's Iowa Driver's License or Non-Operator ID Number or the four digit Voter PIN located on their Iowa Voter ID Card. Any voter may request an Iowa Voter ID Card by contacting their County Auditor's Office.

37. 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 application to request a mail-in ballot requires an Iowa residential address to verify residency requirements but allows a voter to request the ballot to be mailed elsewhere, including to a P.O. Box. **Note that the Post Office will not forward ballots.**

38. MISSED THE APPLICATION DEADLINE: [What if I have not requested a mail-in ballot by the deadline?](#)

With the exception of a medical emergency, (see [Question 52](#)) the only options for a voter who has missed the deadline are election day or in person absentee voting. Voters who are admitted to a health care facility after the deadline for requesting an absentee ballot should contact their County Auditor who will send a bipartisan team to the voter with a ballot. See [Absentee Voting at Health Care Facilities](#).

39. STATUS OF APPLICATION AND/OR BALLOT: [How can I check the status of my application and/or mail-in ballot?](#)

²² Iowa Code Ann. § 53.2.

Voters may track their absentee ballot and their application by visiting [Track Your Absentee Ballot](#) or by contacting their [County Auditor](#).

40. 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?

Voters should contact their [County Auditor](#) to determine why the request/ballot was rejected and to see if the error can be remedied.

41. COMPLETING BALLOT: How do I complete the mail-in ballot?

Included with the absentee ballot will be instructions for voters on how to mark their ballot and return their ballot. Follow the instructions provided.²³

42. ASSISTANCE COMPLETING BALLOT: Can someone assist me in filling out my ballot?

If a voter needs help marking their ballot due to a physical disability or inability to read the ballot, the voter may choose any person to help them except their employer, their employer's agent, or an officer/agent of their union. If voters are not physically able to sign the forms, they can use a rubber stamp or mark to sign. Voters may also ask for assistance or have someone sign the form on their behalf as long as it is in their presence and with their permission.²⁴ See [Absentee Voting FAQ](#).

43. 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?

Voted ballots must be **received** not postmarked by the Auditor by the close of the polls on election day. They may be returned by mail, by hand to the Auditor's office or to a Drop box, if the county has authorized Drop Boxes.

44. BALLOT DROP OFF LOCATIONS: What are the locations for dropping off a ballot (instead of mailing it)?

Voters should consult their county [website](#) for the locations of the County Auditor's office and Drop Boxes, if the county has any. Voted ballots may not be dropped off at the voter's regular polling place on election day but may be surrendered and a regular ballot voted. (see in person option, [Question 48](#)).

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

A voter can designate another person to deliver their completed absentee ballot if:

- The designee is an immediate family member of the voter;
- The designee is a member of the voter's household; or
- The voter is disabled and has designed someone to return their ballot.

²³ [Absentee Voting FAQ](#).

²⁴ Iowa Code Ann. § 53.15.

Directions and rules for designating someone to return a ballot are included in the official instructions included with the mailed ballot.²⁵

46. **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 an absentee ballot because it was damaged or destroyed or lost, voters should contact their [County Auditor](#) for replacement.²⁶ If there is not time to receive a replacement and return it by election day, the voter should consider voting in person either early or on election day. See [Question 48](#).

47. **NON-RECEIPT OF BALLOT:** What if I requested a mail-in ballot but have not received it? What are my options for voting?

Voters can track their absentee ballot online by using the [Track Your Absentee Ballot](#) search. Voters should contact their [County Auditor](#) for a replacement as soon as it becomes apparent that there may be a problem. If the ballot is not received in time for it to be returned by election day, the only option is in person voting (either on election day or early).

48. **IN PERSON OPTION:** What if I requested or received a mail-in ballot but I want to vote in person on Election Day?

A voter may surrender their absentee ballot at the appropriate polling location and vote with a standard ballot in person on Election Day. A registered voter who has requested an absentee ballot by mail but has not received it or who has not brought the ballot to the polls shall be permitted to cast a provisional ballot.²⁷ The provisional ballot **will** be counted unless the absentee ballot has been voted.

HOW TO VOTE: ABSENTEE **(in this state defined as: absentee voting)**

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

Yes, all voters may vote absentee by mail or early absentee voting. There is no distinction in Iowa between Absentee Voting and Early or Mail voting.

More information can be found at [Absentee Voting](#).

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

See [Question 33](#).

²⁵ Iowa Code Ann. § 53.17; see also [Absentee Voting](#).

²⁶ [Absentee Voting FAQ](#).

²⁷ Iowa Code Ann. § 53.19.

51. **IDENTIFICATION:** Are there any identification requirements?

See [Question 36](#).

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

Voters who are admitted to a health care facility after the deadline for requesting an absentee ballot should contact their County Auditor, who will send a bipartisan team to the voter with a ballot. See [Absentee Voting at Health Care Facilities](#).

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

See [Question 35](#).

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

See [Question 39](#).

55. **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 40](#).

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

See [Question 41](#).

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

See [Question 42](#).

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

See [Question 43](#).

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

See [Question 44](#).

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

See [Question 45](#).

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

See [Question 46](#).

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

See [Question 47](#).

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

See [Question 48](#).

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

See [Questions 25](#) to [30](#). Information on absentee in-person voting can be found at [Absentee Voting in Person](#).

POLLING PLACE ISSUES

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

Polling locations should be open at 7:00 a.m. Central Time on Election Day.²⁸ If it is not, first verify that it is a polling location for that election and that there is not a different entrance to the building. If it is a polling place, contact the [County Auditor](#).

66. **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?

Polls are open from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Central Time on Election Day.²⁹ A voter who is in line at 8:00 p.m. MUST be allowed to vote.³⁰ Voters should **stay in line** as they could lose their right to vote if they get out of line.

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

Voters should immediately notify the election officers if the voting equipment breaks down while the polls are open. Extra supplies of paper ballots are required to be on hand and should be available.³¹ Note that it is standard procedure if a scanner breaks down to store the ballots for later scanning. Report the problem, but assure the voter that their votes will be counted.

68. **CAMPAIGNING:** What rules apply to people campaigning or "hanging around" my polling place? What counts as campaigning or electioneering? Can people approach me?

²⁸ Iowa Code Ann. § 49.73.

²⁹ Iowa Code Ann. § 49.73.

³⁰ Iowa Code Ann. § 49.74.

³¹ Iowa Code Ann. § 49.66.

People are prohibited from loitering, congregating, electioneering, posting signs, treating voters, or soliciting votes on the premises or within three hundred feet of a polling place.³² This limitation does not apply to most signs on private property.

Loitering in a polling place while wearing political items is considered electioneering.

69. **VOTER CONDUCT:** What am I prohibited from wearing or doing in a polling place? Can I take photos inside?

Voters may wear a campaign button or clothing when they go to vote but must leave the polling place as soon as they are done voting. However, employees of the county auditor's office, precinct election officials, poll watchers, and observers at satellite voting locations are not allowed to wear political items while at the polling place. Campaigning or electioneering of any kind in a polling place is illegal; loitering in a polling place while wearing political items is considered electioneering. See [Election Day FAQ](#).

70. **POLL WORKER CONDUCT:** What is a poll worker prohibited from wearing or doing in a polling place?

Employees of the county auditor's office, precinct election officials, poll watchers, and observers at satellite voting locations are not allowed to wear political items while at the polling place. Please report any conduct by poll workers that seems intimidating or discriminatory or otherwise improper.

71. **INTIMIDATION:** Are there any other specific restrictions on conduct outside of a polling place? What should I do if I feel unsafe or uncomfortable outside the polling place?

It is unlawful for anyone to interrupt, hinder, or oppose a voter approaching a polling place for the purpose of voting.³³ If a voter feels unsafe or uncomfortable outside the polling place, the voter should notify the state and local election officials at the polling place.

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

Registered voters and precinct officials may challenge any voter on their eligibility.³⁴ A precinct election official may place such person under oath and question the person as to the following:

- 1) Where the person maintains the person's home.
- 2) How long the person has maintained the person's home at such place.
- 3) If the person maintains a home at any other location.
- 4) The person's age.

The precinct election official may permit the challenger to participate in such questions.

The voter can present to the official such evidence and facts as they feel sustains the fact that they are qualified to vote. Upon completion of questioning, if the challenge is withdrawn, the elector may cast the vote in the usual manner. If the challenge is not withdrawn, the challenged voter must cast a provisional ballot. The voter may present written statements or documents, supporting or opposing the counting of any provisional ballot, to the precinct election officials on Election Day, until the hour for

³² Iowa Code Ann. § 39A.4.

³³ Iowa Code Ann. § 39A.4.

³⁴ Iowa Code Ann. § 49.79.

closing the polls, or to the County Auditor's office by the deadline listed on the provisional ballot envelope (usually the following Monday).

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

Iowa law provides specific limits to the presence of police officers. Specifically, the commissioner or the chairperson of the precinct election board may request police officers to keep order and they are permitted to be in the immediate vicinity of polling places, provided they do not solicit votes.³⁵

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

First verify that the caller is at the **correct polling location**. Iowa allows same day registration. A voter qualified to vote who is not registered may register and vote on Election Day. See [Question 7](#).

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

See info in the [How to Vote: Election Day](#) Section, [Questions 22-24](#).

ACCESSIBILITY/ASSISTANCE

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

Polling places are required to post information explaining the voting process.³⁶ Voters may ask poll workers for assistance.

77. **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?

Iowa state law requires all polling places to be accessible to all voters, including the voting area, parking area, walkways and building entries. Every polling place must have [accessible equipment](#) that allow individuals with many types of physical impediments to vote with minimal or now assistance. If a voter is unable to enter the building where the polling place is located because of a disability, curbside voting will be available.³⁷ See [Voting with Disabilities](#).

78. **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. If a voter needs help marking their ballot due to a physical disability or inability to read the ballot in the English language, the voter may choose any person to help them except their employer, employer's agent, or an officer/agent of their union. If the voter would like help from precinct election officials, two

³⁵ Iowa Code Ann. § 49.104.

³⁶ Iowa Code Ann. §§ 49.70, 49.71, 49.68.

³⁷ Iowa Code Ann. §§ 49.21, 49.90.

officials (one from each political party in partisan elections) will assist the voter. Each polling place also has a voter assist terminal. Ballots cast by voters with disabilities shall be counted in the usual manner.³⁸

79. **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?

See [Question 78](#).

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

Yes. If an individual is unable to go inside the polling place a team of election workers will be sent out to the voter's car to provide curbside voting.³⁹ While voters are not required to contact anyone ahead of time to curbside vote, it is recommended that voters should call the [County Auditor](#) ahead of time or bring someone who can assist with informing precinct officials about their desire to do curbside voting.

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

Yes, there is nothing in Iowa law that prohibits the bringing of a voting guide or reference notes with a voter into the voting booth.

STATE SPECIFIC SUPPLEMENT

82. **VOTING WHILE UNHOUSED:** Can a homeless person register to vote?

Yes, a person who is homeless can declare residency in a precinct by describing on the voter registration form a place to which the person often returns.⁴⁰

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

There are several places to look for help. Many voter issues can be resolved by the [County Auditor](#).

For statewide questions, the Iowa Secretary of State has launched a useful voter information portal at [Iowa Voter Ready | How to Vote in Iowa Elections](#). Other information is available from the Secretary of State's website, found at [Voters](#).

Iowa has also launched a voter hotline at 1-888-SOS-VOTE.

³⁸ Iowa Code Ann. §§ 49.90; see also [Voting with Disabilities](#).

³⁹ [Accessibility](#).

⁴⁰ Iowa Code Ann. § 48A.5.