

Frequently Asked Questions

Iowa – General Election 2026

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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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VOTER REGISTRATION

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

To register to vote in Iowa, a person must be:

- a U.S. Citizen;
- an Iowa resident;
- at least 17 years old, as long as they will be 18 at the time of the election;
- NOT convicted of a felony (unless voting rights were restored;
- NOT currently judged mentally incompetent to vote; and
- NOT claiming the right to vote in any other place.¹

¹ Iowa Code Ann. § 48A.5-.6.

Generally, an individual is eligible to vote in Iowa *even if* they move to Iowa *on Election Day* so long as the voter meets the eligibility criteria outlined above

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. However, a voter may change their party registration or affiliation prior to the primary election² including on Election Day. 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 3 General Election.

3. **STATUS:** [Am I registered to vote? What do I need to do if my name has changed since I registered? I am listed as inactive, what does that mean and what do I need to do?](#)

Voters can determine whether they are registered to vote by checking the Iowa Secretary of State's website at [Am I Registered?](#). A voter is listed as inactive if they did not vote in the most recent General Election, did not return a notice sent under the systematic confirmation program,³ or did not return a voter registration acknowledgement form after their registration was completed.⁴ Inactive status does not mean the voter cannot vote and it will be removed if the voter requests an absentee ballot, votes in an election, or re-registers. Voters who do not vote in two consecutive General Elections may have their registrations cancelled. This does not prevent them from re-registering, even on election day.

Voters must update their registration if they change their name, address or party affiliation. Registrations may be updated at any time by submitting new registration either electronically or via paper form, including on Election Day.⁵ See [Updating Your Voter Registration](#).

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 5:00 p.m. the 15th day before the election (October 19, 2026, for the November 3, 2026 General Election). To pre-register online on the [Iowa Department of Transportation website](#), voters must have an Iowa driver's license (DL) 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 (October 19, 2026 for the November 3, 2026 General Election) or, if mailed, be postmarked by that date. Voters may also register at driver's license stations.

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

² Iowa Code Ann. § 43.38, .41 & .42.

³ Iowa Code Ann. § 48A.28.

⁴ Iowa Code Ann. § 48A.37; *see also* Iowa Code Ann. § 48A.26A.

⁵ Iowa Code Ann. § 48A.27.

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

No ID is required to register, however, online registration is available only to voters having an Iowa driver's or non-operator ID. While the paper form asks those without a driver's license (DL) or non-operator ID to provide the last four digits of their social security number, this is not required to register if they do not have one.

For ID necessary to vote, see [Question 19](#).

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?

NOTE: This state has same day registration. See [Question 7](#) for more information.

The pre-registration deadline is 15 days before the General Election (October 19, 2026, for the November 3, 2026 General Election). Mailed applications must be postmarked by this date; online and hand delivered applications must be received by this date.⁶

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

Yes, Iowa allows same-day registration.⁷ A voter who has not pre-registered may register on Election Day or at Early Voting by appearing at the precinct in which the voter resides and completing a voter registration application and making a written oath. They must provide proof of identity. See [Question 19](#). If their ID does not include their current residence address, they must also provide proof of residence address. See [Question 8](#).

Voters **must** be at the correct [polling place](#) for their address.

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 (same day). Voters 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 include their new address.

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):⁸

- Residential lease
- Utility bill (including a cell phone bill)
- Bank statement

⁶ Iowa Code Ann. § 48A.9.

⁷ Iowa Code Ann. § 48A.7A.

⁸ Iowa Code Ann. § 48A.7A(1)b.

- Paycheck
- Government check or other government document
- Property tax statement

See [Question 19](#).

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. A person does not lose residence for voting purposes if they leave their home to reside temporarily in another state or precinct.⁹

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 generally register to vote at either the student's home address or at their school address, but not at both locations.¹⁰ Students may change their registered address to either location. If the student is not at their registered address on Election Day, they may request an absentee ballot or use same-day registration. More information can be found at [Voting as a College Student](#).

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 (or their parents address) before leaving the U.S. or enlisting. This includes citizens who were born abroad and have never lived in the US. More information can be found at [Military Voters](#) as well as the [Federal Voter Assistance Program](#).

Registering and Requesting an Absentee Ballot: Military personnel and voters living abroad can register to vote and request an absentee ballot by completing a Federal Post Card Application ([FPCA](#)), and submitting it to their County Auditor or emailing it to uocava@sos.iowa.gov. See [Military Voters](#) and [Military and Overseas Civilian Voters](#). Voters may request the ballot by mail, email, or fax. If requesting a ballot by email or fax, the request must be received by the [County Auditor's office](#) by the close of business on the Monday before the election (November 2, 2026). For office locations and hours, see the [County's website](#). Military and overseas civilian voters are eligible to request a ballot via mail through the day prior to the election (November 2, 2026). However, 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 adult sibling, provided they live in the voter's County, may submit a proxy request for a ballot on behalf of the voter. Military and overseas citizens who will be outside of the United States when General Election ballots are available may request a Special Write-In Absentee Ballot.¹¹ Requests for a Special Write-In Absentee Ballot may be made beginning 120 days (Monday, July 6, 2026) before the election (Tuesday, November 3, 2026) and must be made before regular ballots are available. The request must include the following statement: *"To the best of my belief I will be outside the continental United States and unable to vote and return a regular absentee ballot by normal mail delivery within the period provided for regular absentee ballots. I request a special write-in*

⁹ Iowa Code Ann. § 48A.5A(3).

¹⁰ Iowa Code Ann. § 48A.5A(5).

¹¹ Iowa Code Ann. § 53.45; see [Military and Overseas Civilian Voters](#).

absentee ballot." Eligible voters may also request a regular absentee ballot. If the regular absentee ballot is properly voted and returned, the Special Write-In Absentee Ballot is void and will be rejected.

More information can be found at [Military Voters](#) and [Military and Overseas Civilian Voters](#). **Note: An absentee ballot can be requested even though it is clear that it will not arrive in time and the Federal Write-in Absentee Ballot (described below) can be 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. When returning a ballot by email or fax, the voter must sign a statement waiving the voter's right to a secret ballot and affirming that the voter is eligible to return the ballot electronically. **The deadline for returning the ballot depends on the method:** return by mail must be **postmarked** by the Monday before Election Day (November 2, 2026) and **received** by noon on the Monday following the election (November 9, 2026), and return by email/fax must be **received** by 8:00 pm CT on Election Day (November 3, 2026).

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. The back-up ballot should be submitted as soon as it becomes evident that the absentee ballot may not be received in time. See [Federal Voter Assistance Program](#). If the absentee ballot is subsequently received it should be voted as well. For more information see [Military Voters](#) and [Military and Overseas Civilian Voters](#).

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? What process \(if any\) is needed to restore my right to vote if it was impacted?](#)

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.¹² Individuals whose rights were restored 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). If someone has been convicted of a violation of Chapter 707, their voting rights are not automatically restored. Instead, they must apply to the Governor for restoration of voting rights. 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. They should fill out the [Application for Restoration of Voting Rights](#), and deliver it to the Office of the Governor. 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?](#)

¹² [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](#).

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 right to vote has not been restored.

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

See [Question 72](#).

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 their new residence.

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 (three hours for state employees) 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 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 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.¹³

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.¹⁴

19. IDENTIFICATION: [What identification is required to vote?](#)

¹³ Iowa Code Ann. § 49.109.

¹⁴ Iowa Code Ann. § 49.74.

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 an expiration date.¹⁵ See [here](#):

- Iowa Driver's License or Non-Operator ID (may be expired up to 90 days except for same day registrants)
- Out of State Driver's License or Non-Operator ID
- U.S. Military ID or Veteran ID
- U.S. Passport
- ID card issued by employer
- Student ID issued by Iowa high school or college
- Tribal ID Card/Document (not expired with photo and signed)
- Iowa Voter Identification Card (signed prior to submitting to pollworkers)

An **Iowa Voter Identification Card** will be mailed automatically to all registrants who do not appear in the Iowa Department of Transportation's Driver's License or Non-Operator ID files at the time they register to vote.¹⁶ However, any voter may request an Iowa Voter Identification Card from their [County Auditor](#).

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

Voters without the necessary ID will be offered a provisional ballot, but must provide ID at their precinct before the polls close, or to the Auditor's office no later than noon the Monday following the election for their ballot to be counted.

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.¹⁷ 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 documentation following the election.¹⁸ However, if a voter casts a provisional ballot in a precinct where they are not registered, their vote will not be counted.¹⁹

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 mail ballots but did not surrender them at the polls.²⁰ 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

¹⁵ Iowa Code Ann. § 49.78.

¹⁶ Iowa Code Ann. § 48A.10A.

¹⁷ Iowa Code Ann. § 49.77.3.

¹⁸ Iowa Code Ann. § 49.77.3(a); *see also* Iowa Code Ann. § 49.81.

¹⁹ Iowa Code Ann. § 53.25.

²⁰ Iowa Code Ann. § 53.19(3).

the voter is eligible to vote, the provisional ballot will be counted.²¹ 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?

Yes, generally Voters who are not permitted to vote and who believe they are eligible and in the correct precinct may request a provisional ballot.

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

Depending upon the reason for the provisional ballot, the voter may need to provide evidence showing why they are eligible to vote to the precinct election officials before the polls close or to the County Auditor's office by the deadline listed on the provisional ballot envelope, usually noon on the Monday following the election (November 9, 2026). The voter will receive 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.²²

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)?

Yes, Iowa voters can vote early in person ("absentee voting in person"). See [Can I vote Absentee in other ways besides mailing?](#)

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

No. Iowa allows all voters to vote early. Same day registration is available at early voting.

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 14, 2026) to the day preceding Election Day (Monday, November 2, 2026), but dates and hours may vary with the county.

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

²¹ Iowa Code Ann. § 49.81.

²² Iowa Code Ann. § 49.81.

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](#). See also [How Do I Vote Early In Person?](#)

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 Military and Overseas Civilian Voters, who may use the Federal Post Card Application ([FPCA](#)) to request ballots for all elections that the voter is eligible to vote in 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?

A 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 19, 2026 for the November 3, 2026 General Election). See [Absentee Voting](#) and [Absentee Voting FAQ](#).

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.

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 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. Someone else (not a candidate) may deliver the request on behalf of the voter.

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 application and/or ballot. However, the mail-in application requires the voter's Iowa Driver's License Number, Non-Operator ID Number, or the four-digit Voter PIN located on the Iowa Voter ID Card. Voters without a Drivers License or Non-Operator ID are automatically sent a Voter ID, and any voter may request one 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 voting or in person absentee (early) voting.

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

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 application or 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.

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.²³ 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 [County Auditor](#) by the close of the polls on Election Day. They may be returned by mail, by hand to the County 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 in person.²⁴ (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.

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 is damaged or destroyed or lost, voters should contact their [County Auditor](#) for replacement. 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, which will show the date the absentee ballot request was processed, the date the ballot was sent to the voter, and the date the voted ballot was received. 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).

²³ Iowa Code Ann. § 53.15(2).

²⁴ Iowa Code Ann. § 53.19.

²⁵ Iowa Code Ann. §§ 53.17, 53.33.

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.²⁶ 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. There is no distinction in Iowa between Absentee Voting and Mail voting.

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

See [Question 33](#).

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?

²⁶ Iowa Code Ann. § 53.19.

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](#).

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.²⁷ If a polling place is not open, 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?

A voter who is in line at 8:00 p.m. **MUST** be allowed to vote.²⁸ 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.²⁹ 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?

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.³⁰ This limitation does not apply to most signs on private property. See [Election Day FAQ](#).

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. Campaigning or electioneering of any kind in a polling place is illegal; loitering in a polling place after voting 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?

²⁷ Iowa Code Ann. § 49.73.

²⁸ Iowa Code Ann. § 49.74.

²⁹ Iowa Code Ann. § 49.66.

³⁰ Iowa Code Ann. § 39A.4.

It is unlawful for anyone to interrupt, hinder, or oppose a voter approaching a polling place for the purpose of voting.³¹ 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.³² 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.
- 5) The person's citizenship status.

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 closing the polls, or to the County Auditor's office by the deadline listed on the provisional ballot envelope (usually 12 noon on the following Monday).³³

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.³⁴

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 [Questions 22-24](#).

³¹ Iowa Code Ann. § 39A.4.

³² Iowa Code Ann. § 49.79.

³³ Iowa Code Ann. § 49.81.

³⁴ Iowa Code Ann. § 49.104.

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.³⁵ 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 no 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.³⁶ See [Elections Accessibility](#).

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 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.³⁷

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 two precinct election officials, one from each political party in partisan elections, will be sent out to the voter's car to provide curbside voting.³⁸ 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.

³⁵ Iowa Code Ann. §§ 49.70, 49.71, 49.68.

³⁶ Iowa Code Ann. §§ 49.21, 49.90.

³⁷ Iowa Code Ann. §§ 49.90; see also [Elections Accessibility](#).

³⁸ Iowa Code Ann. § 49.90; see also .

STATE SPECIFIC SUPPLEMENT

82. **VOTING WHILE UNHOUSED:** Can someone who is unhoused register to vote?

Yes, a person who is unhoused can declare residency in a precinct by describing on the voter registration form a place to which the person often returns. See [VOTING WHILE UNHOUSED](#)

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 [Elections & Voting](#).

Iowa has also launched a voter hotline problems or potential misconduct at 1-888-SOS-VOTE. A voter can also submit a [Voter Hotline Form](#) online.