



Frequently Asked Questions

Rhode Island – General Election 2022

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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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REGISTERING TO VOTE

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

A voter may be eligible to register to vote if they are:

- A citizen of the United States
- A resident of the Rhode Island city or town where the voter wishes to vote (for 30 days preceding the next election)
- At least 16 years of age (but cannot vote until 18)¹

A voter may not register to vote if they are:

- Judged mentally incompetent by a court of law
- A convicted felon still in prison. Once released, the department of corrections shall notify individuals that their voting rights have been restored, provide them with a voter registration form, offer assistance in filling out the form, and transmit the form to the state board or the local Board where the individual resides.²

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

If the voter is registered with a party, they may only vote in that party's primary.³

Unaffiliated voters can vote in any party primary, but by doing so, they'll become affiliated with that party. To return to unaffiliated status, the voter must fill out a form at the polling place after they vote, update their information in the state's [voter information portal](#) or fill out a new voter registration form.⁴

The deadline for the voter to [change their party](#) before the September 13 primary is August 14.

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

¹ R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-1-3; R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-9.1-33.

² R.I. Const., Art. II, § 1.

³ R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-15-24.

⁴ R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-9.1-23.

If eligible, the voter will automatically be registered to vote when they interact with the DMV and do not opt out.⁵

The voter can determine whether they are registered to vote by checking the Rhode Island Secretary of State's "Voter Information Center" [Website](#). Voters will need to provide their name, date of birth, and zip code.

Voters may affiliate with a party when they register or register as unaffiliated (aka Independent.) Persons registered as affiliated with a party may only vote in that party's primary. Unaffiliated voters may vote in any primary. Voters can change affiliations.⁶ See: [Party Affiliation](#)

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 can register to vote [online](#) on the Rhode Island Secretary of State's "Voter Information Center" or by [paper submission](#).

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

Voters will be asked to show a photo ID.

IDs must be valid or, if expired, not have expired more than six (6) months prior to voting, but they do not need to have a current address.

Acceptable Photo IDs include:

- RI driver's license/permit
- U.S. passport
- ID card issued by any federally recognized tribal government
- ID card issued by an educational institution in the U.S.
- U.S. military ID card
- ID card issued by the U.S. government or State of Rhode Island (RIPTA bus pass, etc.)
- Government issued medical card
- RI Voter ID card⁷

If a voter is unable to show a photo ID, they may vote using a standard provisional ballot.⁸ See [Rhode Island Voter ID Information](#).

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?

Voters must apply to register to vote 30 calendar days before an election the voter intends to vote in.⁹ For the 2022 primary election, this deadline is **August 14, 2022**. For the 2022 General Election, this deadline is **October 9, 2022**.

⁵ R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-9.1-7.

⁶ R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-9.1-23.

⁷ R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-19-24.2.

⁸ R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-19-24.2(d).

⁹ R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-9.1-3.

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

No. Same day registration in Rhode Island is only available for Presidential elections for a presidential/vice presidential only ballot.

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

If the voter moved to their current address **less than 30 days before the election**, they are eligible to vote at their previous assigned polling place associated with their previous address's assigned polling place.

If the voter moved **more than 30 days before the election but within the same City/Town** as their previous address, they vote at the polling location associated with their new address.

If the voter moved to a new City/Town **30 days or more, but less than 6 months**, before the election they are eligible to vote a Limited Ballot at the Board of Canvassers of their previous City/Town of registration.¹⁰

If the voter moved from a different state, they must register 30 days before the election EXCEPT in a presidential election when they are eligible to vote for President/Vice-President only.

See [Chart](#) on Rhode Island Board of Elections Website

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

All Rhode Island voters can vote by mail.¹¹

If the voter is registered to vote in another state, but living temporarily in Rhode Island, they can still vote in their state's election with a mail ballot.

For more information, refer to Rhode Island Secretary of State's "Vote from Home with a Mail Ballot" [Website](#).

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

Yes. If the voter attends school in Rhode Island, they can establish residency and vote in Rhode Island if they have a present intention to remain at their Rhode Island school address for the time being and to make it their principal home (i.e., they think of their Rhode Island residence as the place to which they intend to return when they are away from that residence).¹²

Rhode Island has not specifically addressed remote learning.

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

Rhode Island military/overseas voters use a special process to receive and return their mail ballot. [The Federal Voting Assistance Program \(FVAP\)](#) provides step-by-step guidance on how a military/overseas voter can apply for and receive their mail ballot.

¹⁰ R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-9.1-16.

¹¹ R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-20-2.

¹² R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-1-3.1.

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

A resident of Rhode Island who has been convicted of a felony and is currently incarcerated may not vote in Rhode Island elections.¹³ However, voting rights are restored to all Rhode Island residents who have been released from incarceration or who were never incarcerated following felony convictions.¹⁴ Upon release from incarceration, the department of corrections shall notify individuals that their voting rights have been restored, provide them with a voter registration form, offer assistance in filling out the form, and transmit the form to the state board or the local Board where the individual resides.¹⁵

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

No. A resident of Rhode Island who has been convicted of a felony and is currently incarcerated may not vote in Rhode Island elections.¹⁶

HOW TO VOTE: ELECTION DAY

14. HOURS: [When do the polls open/close on Election Day?](#)

The polls must be open from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. eastern time on Election Day. The only exception is New Shoreham (Block Island), where the polls must be open from 9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. eastern time (except for presidential primaries, when New Shoreham polls must be open from 12:00 p.m.). A voter who is waiting in line by 8:00 p.m. must be allowed to vote. (Please note Burrillville, Charlestown, Hopkinton, Jamestown, Little Compton, Richmond and Westerly open at 9:00 am in special elections.)¹⁷

***Note to hotline volunteer:** If hotline volunteers learn that a polling place is not open at 7:00 a.m. (or 9:00 a.m. in New Shoreham), advise voters to stay at the polling location, and contact their hotline captain. The captain will contact the bipartisan pair of local Supervisors (“local Supervisors”) or local Board of Canvassers (“local Board”).

***Note to hotline volunteer:** If hotline volunteers learn that a polling place prohibits those who were in line by the time the polls closed from voting, advise voters to stay at the polling location and contact their hotline captain immediately. The hotline captain will contact the local Supervisors or local Board.

15. POLLING LOCATION: [Where do I vote on Election Day?](#)

Voters can find their polling place on the Rhode Island Secretary of State’s [“Voter Information Center.”](#)

***Note to hotline volunteer:** Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, many polling places have been moved or consolidated. Voters should be advised to check the polling place listed on the Voter Notification Card they received from the local election authority a few days before the election. Due to the recent redistricting of all election districts many voters are voting at new locations in 2022.

¹³ R.I. Const., Art. II, § 1.

¹⁴ R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-9.2-3(a).

¹⁵ R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-9.2-3(c).

¹⁶ R.I. Const., Art. II, § 1.

¹⁷ <https://vote.sos.ri.gov/Elections/PollingPlaceHours>

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

A voter who is waiting in line by 8:00 p.m. must be allowed to vote. (Please note Burrillville, Charlestown, Hopkinton, Jamestown, Little Compton, Richmond and Westerly open at 9:00 am in special elections.)¹⁸

***Note to hotline volunteer:** If hotline volunteers learn that a polling place prohibits those who were in line by the time the polls closed from voting, advise voters to stay at the polling location and contact their hotline captain immediately.

17. IDENTIFICATION: What identification is required to vote?

Voters will be asked to show a valid photo ID.

IDs must be valid or, if expired, not have expired more than six (6) months prior to voting, but they do not need to have a current address.

Acceptable Photo IDs include:

- RI driver's license/permit
- U.S. passport
- ID card issued by any federally recognized tribal government
- ID card issued by an educational institution in the U.S.
- U.S. military ID card
- ID card issued by the U.S. government or State of Rhode Island (RIPTA bus pass, etc.)
- Government issued medical card
- RI Voter ID card¹⁹

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

No eligible voter will be turned away at the polls. Voters who do not bring ID to the polls can vote using a standard provisional ballot, which will be counted if the signature they give at the polling place matches the signature on their voter registration card.²⁰ See [Rhode Island Voter ID Information](#).

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

The volunteer should tell the voter to go to their assigned polling place if at all possible.

If a voter's name does not appear on the voting list at the polling place where they are, they can cast a provisional ballot.²¹ If the registered voter casts a provisional ballot in the correct precinct in the city or town where they are registered, it will be fully counted. If a registered voter casts a provisional ballot in the incorrect precinct but the correct congressional district and city or town, only their votes for federal offices (including President and Vice-President) will be counted. However, if they vote in the incorrect city or town or the incorrect congressional district, the voter's provisional ballot will be disqualified.²²

¹⁸ <https://vote.sos.ri.gov/Elections/PollingPlaceHours>

¹⁹ R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-19-24.2.

²⁰ R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-19-24.2(d).

²¹ R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-19-24.1.

²² R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-1-3; R.I. Bd. of Elections, Rules & Regulations for Provisional Voting, 410-RICR-20-00-13, §13.5.2(A).

Check status of provisional ballots [here](#)

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

Voters who do not bring ID to the polls can vote using a standard provisional ballot, which will be counted if the signature they give at the polling place matches the signature on their voter registration card.²³

If a voter's name does not appear on the voting list at the polling place where they are, they can cast a provisional ballot.²⁴

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

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

In the 20 days leading up to Election Day, voters can vote in person at their city or town hall during regular business hours.

The early voting period for the September 2022 Primary Election begins on August 23 and ends on September 12 at 4:00 p.m.

The early voting period for the November 2022 General Election begins on October 19 and ends on November 7 at 4:00 p.m.

Voters can go to their [local board of canvassers](#) located in their city/town hall.

However, voters who requested a mail ballot may not exchange it for an early in person ballot.²⁵

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

No reason is needed.²⁶

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

Voters can vote in person at their city or town hall during their regular business hours. Voters can go to the [local board of canvassers](#) located in their city/town hall for more information.

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

²³ R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-19-24.2(d).

²⁴ R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-19-24.1.

²⁵ <https://elections.ri.gov/voting/emergency.php>

²⁶ <https://vote.sos.ri.gov/Voter/PersonVotingPage>

Voters can vote in person at their city or town hall during their regular business hours. Voters can find their city or town's early voting hours and locations on the Rhode Island Secretary of State's [Website](#).

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

Voters will be asked to show a valid photo ID.

IDs must be valid or, if expired, not have expired more than six (6) months prior to voting, but they do not need to have a current address.

Acceptable Photo IDs include:

- RI driver's license/permit
- U.S. passport
- ID card issued by any federally recognized tribal government
- ID card issued by an educational institution in the U.S.
- U.S. military ID card
- ID card issued by the U.S. government or State of Rhode Island (RIPTA bus pass, etc.)
- Government issued medical card
- RI Voter ID Card²⁷

No eligible voter will be turned away at the polls. Voters who do not bring ID to the polls can vote using a standard provisional ballot, which will be counted if the signature they give at the polling place matches the signature on their voter registration card.²⁸ See [Rhode Island Voter ID Information](#).

HOW TO VOTE: VOTE BY MAIL

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

No, voters must submit a mail ballot application for each individual election they wish to vote in. They can either download the [PrimaryMBAApplication](#), pick up or have someone pick up an application at their local board of canvassers, or contact their [local board of canvassers](#) to request one.

For 2022, the Rhode Island Secretary of State is still encouraging all Rhode Island voters to apply for a mail ballot and vote safely from home.

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All registered voters may vote by mail. For more information on how to cast a mail ballot, see the Rhode Island Secretary of State's [Website](#) for a step by step guide.

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

No. All Rhode Island residents who are otherwise eligible to vote may vote by mail. <https://vote.sos.ri.gov/Voter/VotebyMail>

²⁷ R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-19-24.2.

²⁸ R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-19-24.2(d).

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

The voter's local Board must receive the completed application by 4:00 p.m. on the 21st day before the election.²⁹

To receive a mail ballot for the Primary Election, voters must complete and [submit](#) their application to their [local board of canvassers](#) by August 23, 2022 at 4:00 p.m. The application must be *received* by August 23, 2022.

To receive a mail ballot for the General Election, voters must complete and [submit](#) applications to their local board of canvassers by October 18, 2022 at 4:00 p.m. The application must be *received* by October 18, 2022.

Postmarked applications received after the deadline will not be accepted.

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

Voters must submit their mail ballot application by hand or by mail.

Every mail ballot includes a postage-paid return envelope so voters can easily return their mail ballot for free. Voters may also hand-deliver it to [their local board of canvassers](#), drop it in a secure 24-hour drop box, or give it to someone to return it for the voter.

All mail ballots must be received by the State Board of Elections by 8:00 p.m. on Election Day. See Rhode Island [VoteByMail](#)

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

Yes, the signature on the mail ballot will be compared to the signature in the voter record. It is a felony to fill out a mail ballot application or a mail ballot fraudulently.³⁰

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

Voters can indicate the address where they want the ballot to be sent.

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

Registered voters may vote at their polling place on Election Day. If unable to do so, voters may still [request an emergency mail ballot](#) from their local board of canvassers

²⁹ R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-20-2.1.

³⁰ R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-20-2.1.

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

Voters can track their mail ballot status by going to the Rhode Island Secretary of State's [Website](#) and entering their name, date of birth and zip code.

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

Voters will be notified of the challenge and/or defect by the local board of canvassers, and given the opportunity to correct or complete the mail ballot application/certification envelope in the following ways:

To correct omitted signatures or other information: The voter will be asked to either appear at the Board of Elections office to correct the error or provide the information, or the voter shall be instructed to submit an Omitted Signature Affidavit Form with all of the information required to certify the mail ballot application. The Omitted Signature Affidavit Form must be received (not just postmarked) by the Board no later than 4:00 p.m. either three (3) days following a primary, or seven (7) days following an election.

For voters who are confined to a hospital, nursing home or other institution, the Board shall assign two (2) designated election supervisors to obtain a signature or other missing information from the voter in person, whenever possible.

If the voter fails to provide the missing information required by law and these rules and regulations, within the deadline, the ballot will be rejected. The voter will be notified in writing by the local board of canvassers that the mail ballot was not accepted and the reasons why the ballot was not accepted.³¹

Mail ballot certification signature discrepancy: The voter will be notified that they must either personally appear at the Board of Elections office to confirm their signature or, alternatively, the voter may complete and return a Signature Certification Affidavit Form, with their signature and attestation that the mail ballot was submitted and signed by the voter. The Signature Certification Affidavit Form must be received (not just postmarked) by the Board no later than 4:00 p.m. either three (3) days following a primary, or seven (7) days following an election.³²

Voters can also call their [local board of canvassers](#) for assistance.

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

When the ballot arrives, voters should read it carefully and follow the instructions to complete and return it. Mail ballots do not require Voter ID, and *no longer* require signatures from two witnesses or a notary.

Visit the Rhode Island Secretary of State's Voter Information Center and enter your address to [view a sample ballot](#).

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

³¹ R.I. Bd. of Elections, Rules & Regulations for Mail Ballot Certification Process, 410 RICR 20-00-23, §23.12(B).

³² R.I. Bd. of Elections, Rules & Regulations for Mail Ballot Certification Process, 410 RICR 20-00-23, §23.12(C).

Voters can contact their [local board of canvassers](#) for assistance.

Voters who have difficulty reading/marking ballots can also request an accessible mail ballot. An accessible ballot is an electronic ballot made available to voters that indicate this choice on their mail ballot application. A voter can view their mail ballot via their online voter record at vote.ri.gov and mark their ballot online using accessibility tools provided in the software. The voter prints their ballot and returns the marked ballot in the envelopes provided as part of the mail ballot package the voter received in the mail.

For additional information on resources available to voters who may need assistance or special accommodations, please visit the Rhode Island Secretary of State's "[Accessibility and Voting Assistance Website](#)".

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

All mail ballots must be received by the State Board of Elections by 8:00 p.m. on the day of the election (September 13, 2022 for the Primary Election and November 8, 2022 for the General Election). Voters should allow at least seven mailing days to ensure their ballot is received on time. Voters may also drop completed mail ballots in the sealed envelopes in any of the secure 24-hour drop box located around the state by 8:00 p.m. on Election Day.³³

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

If the voter cannot mail the ballot back in time, they may use a Drop Box. See: [Drop Box Locator](#)

Voters may utilize any drop box in any Rhode Island City/Town Hall. The drop box does not need to be in the City/Town where the voter resides and is registered. There are drop **boxes in every polling location**. Voters may place the completed oath envelope with the enclosed voted ballot in the drop box of their choosing.

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

Yes, voters can give it to someone they trust to return it for them. Never rely on a stranger to do so.

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

Voters can print another application from the Rhode Island Secretary of State's website: [VoteByMail Application](#) or contact the Elections Division via telephone at (401) 222-2340 or by email at elections@sos.ri.gov to have one mailed to them.

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

³³ R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-20-22.1: "Any ballot that is cast by a voter . . . and is deposited into a drop box on or before the close of polls on election day, shall be deemed to be received by and in the possession of the board of elections."

Voters can go to [BallotTrax](#) to track the status of their mail ballot. If voters have questions regarding the status of their application or mail ballot, voters can contact their [local board of canvassers](#).

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

If voters applied for a mail ballot, they should complete the process by mail. Any voter who applies for a mail ballot and attempts to vote in person will be required to vote a provisional ballot. The provisional ballot will be returned to the local board of canvassers where election officials will determine if voters have already cast a mail ballot or if the provisional ballot should be counted.

Voting more than once in the same election is a felony.³⁴

HOW TO VOTE: ABSENTEE

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

All registered voters may vote by mail. For more information on how to cast a mail ballot, see the Rhode Island Secretary of State's [Website](#) for a step by step guide.

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

The voter's local Board must receive the completed application by 4:00 p.m. on the 21st day before the election.³⁵

To receive a mail ballot for the Primary Election, voters must complete and submit their application to their [local board of canvassers](#) by August 23, 2022 at 4:00 p.m. The application must be *received* by August 23, 2022.

To receive a mail ballot for the General Election, voters must complete and submit applications to their local board of canvassers by October 18, 2022 at 4:00 p.m. The application must be *received* by October 18, 2022.

Postmarked applications received after the deadline will not be accepted.

45. IDENTIFICATION: Are there any identification requirements?

The signature on the mail ballot will be compared to the signature in the voter record. It is a felony to fill out a mail ballot application or a mail ballot fraudulently.³⁶

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

³⁴ R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-23-4.

³⁵ R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-20-2.1.

³⁶ R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-20-2.1.

If circumstances arise within 20 days of an election, voters can apply for [an emergency mail ballot](#) from their local board of canvassers or vote at their local board of canvassers until 4:00 P.M on the day before the election.

Voters can also apply for an emergency mail ballot and have it mailed to them or authorize someone to pick up their emergency mail ballot on their behalf within 20 days of an election. Remember that the State Board of Elections must receive mail ballots by 8:00 P.M. on Election Day.

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

Voters must submit their mail ballot application by hand or by mail.

Every mail ballot includes a postage-paid return envelope so voters can easily return their mail ballot for free. Voters may also hand-deliver it to [their local board of canvassers](#), drop it in a secure 24-hour drop box, or give it to someone to return it for the voter.

All mail ballots must be received by the State Board of Elections by 8:00 p.m. on Election Day. See Rhode Island [VoteByMail](#)

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

Voters can track their mail ballot status by going to the Rhode Island Secretary of State's [Website](#) and entering their name, date of birth and zip code.

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

Voters will be notified of the challenge and/or defect by the local board of canvassers, and given the opportunity to correct or complete the mail ballot application/certification envelope in the following ways:

To correct omitted signatures or other information: The voter will be asked to either appear at the Board of Elections office to correct the error or provide the information, or the voter shall be instructed to submit an Omitted Signature Affidavit Form with all of the information required to certify the mail ballot application. The Omitted Signature Affidavit Form must be received (not just postmarked) by the Board no later than 4:00 p.m. either three (3) days following a primary, or seven (7) days following an election.

For voters who are confined to a hospital, nursing home or other institution, the Board shall assign two (2) designated election supervisors to obtain a signature or other missing information from the voter in person, whenever possible.

If the voter fails to provide the missing information required by law and these rules and regulations, within the deadline, the ballot will be rejected. The voter will be notified in writing by the local board of canvassers that the mail ballot was not accepted and the reasons why the ballot was not accepted.³⁷

³⁷ R.I. Bd. of Elections, Rules & Regulations for Mail Ballot Certification Process, 410 RICR 20-00-23, §23.12(B).

Mail ballot certification signature discrepancy: The voter will be notified that they must either personally appear at the Board of Elections office to confirm their signature or, alternatively, the voter may complete and return a Signature Certification Affidavit Form, with their signature and attestation that the mail ballot was submitted and signed by the voter. The Signature Certification Affidavit Form must be received (not just postmarked) by the Board no later than 4:00 p.m. either three (3) days following a primary, or seven (7) days following an election.³⁸

Voters can also call their [local board of canvassers](#) for assistance.

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

When the ballot arrives, voters should read it carefully and follow the instructions to complete and return it. Mail ballots do not require Voter ID, and *no longer* require signatures from two witnesses or a notary.

Visit the Rhode Island Secretary of State’s Voter Information Center and enter your address to [view a sample ballot](#).

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

Voters can contact their [local board of canvassers](#) for assistance.

Voters who have difficulty reading/marking ballots can also request an accessible mail ballot. An accessible ballot is an electronic ballot made available to voters that indicate this choice on their mail ballot application. A voter can view their mail ballot via their online voter record at vote.ri.gov and mark their ballot online using accessibility tools provided in the software. The voter prints their ballot and returns the marked ballot in the envelopes provided as part of the mail ballot package the voter received in the mail.

For additional information on resources available to voters who may need assistance or special accommodations, please visit the Rhode Island Secretary of State’s [“Accessibility and Voting Assistance” Website](#).

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

All mail ballots must be received by the State Board of Elections by 8:00 p.m. on the day of the election (September 13, 2022 for the Primary Election and November 8, 2022 for the General Election). Voters should allow at least seven mailing days to ensure their ballot is received on time. Voters may also drop completed mail ballots in the sealed envelopes in any of the secure 24-hour drop box located around the state by 8:00 p.m. on Election Day.³⁹

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

If the voter cannot mail the ballot back in time, they may use a Drop Box. See: [Drop Box Locator](#)

³⁸ R.I. Bd. of Elections, Rules & Regulations for Mail Ballot Certification Process, 410 RICR 20-00-23, §23.12(C).

³⁹ R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-20-22.1 “Any ballot that is cast by a voter . . . and is deposited into a drop box on or before the close of polls on election day , shall be deemed to be received by and in the possession of the board of elections.”

Voters may utilize any drop box in any Rhode Island City/Town Hall. The drop box does not need to be in the City/Town where the voter resides and is registered. There are drop **boxes in every polling location**. Voters may place the completed oath envelope with the enclosed voted ballot in the drop box of choosing.

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

Yes, voters can give it to someone they trust to return it for them. Never rely on a stranger to do so.

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

Voters can print another application from Rhode Island Secretary of State's website: [VoteByMail Application](#) or contact the Elections Division via telephone at (401) 222-2340 or by email at elections@sos.ri.gov to have one mailed to them.

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

Voters can go to [BallotTrax](#) to track the status of their mail ballot. If voters have questions regarding the status of their application or mail ballot, voters can contact their [local board of canvassers](#).

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

If voters applied for a mail ballot, they should complete the process by mail. Any voter who applies for a mail ballot and attempts to vote in person will be required to vote a provisional ballot. The provisional ballot will be returned to the local board of canvassers where election officials will determine if voters have already cast a mail ballot or if the provisional ballot should be counted.

Voting more than once in the same election is a felony.⁴⁰

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

In the 20 days leading up to Election Day, voters can vote in person at their city or town hall during regular business hours.

NOTE: voters who requested mail ballots must vote those ballots and turn them in at the city hall. They may not exchange a mail ballot for an early ballot.

The early voting period for the September 2022 Primary Election begins on August 23 and ends on September 12 at 4:00 p.m.

The early voting period for the November 2022 General Election begins on October 19 and ends on November 7 at 4:00 p.m.

Voters should go to their [local board of canvassers](#) located in their city/town hall.

⁴⁰ R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-23-4.

POLLING PLACE ISSUES

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

Voters should remain at the polling place and call the Rhode Island Board of Elections at 401-222-2345.

***Note to hotline volunteer:** If hotline volunteers learn of a polling place not opening on time or that is closed, they should notify their hotline captain immediately.

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

A voter who is waiting in line by 8:00 p.m. must be allowed to vote. (Please note Burrillville, Charlestown, Hopkinton, Jamestown, Little Compton, Richmond and Westerly open at 9:00 am in special elections.)⁴¹

***Note to hotline volunteer:** If hotline volunteers learn of long lines, they should notify their hotline captain immediately.

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

Rhode Island uses optical scan voting machines. Voters should immediately notify the election officers if the voting equipment breaks down while the polls are open. During the time in which an optical scan unit is not accepting ballots, a voter can place their voted paper ballots into a special ballot box.⁴²

***Note to hotline volunteer:** If hotline volunteers learn of equipment not working properly at a polling place, they should notify their hotline captain immediately.

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

If a voter needs assistance in casting the vote itself, and requests this assistance, two bipartisan Supervisors will instruct or assist the voter in the voting booth.⁴³

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

Yes. All polling places in Rhode Island should be accessible to voters with disabilities and have voting equipment to accommodate voters who are blind, visually impaired, or have a disability or condition that makes it difficult to traditionally mark a ballot.⁴⁴ Every Rhode Island polling place is equipped with anExpressVote, a machine designed to assist voters with disabilities to independently mark their ballots. Any voter who needs assistance with the ExpressVote should request assistance from the warden or the moderator.⁴⁵

⁴¹ <https://vote.sos.ri.gov/Elections/PollingPlaceHours>

⁴² R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-19-20.

⁴³ R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-19-26.

⁴⁴ R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-19-3.2; <https://vote.sos.ri.gov/Voter/AccessibleVoting>.

⁴⁵ <https://elections.ri.gov/voting/automark.php> .

If a voter reports that the polling place is not accessible to the handicapped, call the warden or moderator, so they can report the problem immediately to the local Supervisors or local Board. For more information on accessibility and voting assistance, visit the Rhode Island Secretary of State's ["Accessibility and Voting Assistance" Website](#).

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

Yes. Any voter who needs assistance voting is entitled to have some person of their choice, other than the voter's employer, an agent of the employer, or an officer or agent of the voter's union, mark the voter's choices or assist the voter in marking their choices on the ballot. The voter and the person helping them will be asked to sign an affidavit stating that the voter requested assistance.⁴⁶

A voter may also request instructions or assistance in voting from a bipartisan pair of Supervisors.⁴⁷

For more information on accessibility and voting assistance, visit the Rhode Island Secretary of State's ["Accessibility and Voting Assistance" Website](#).

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

No person may display or distribute any campaign literature, political buttons or any other document designed to aid or defeat a candidate, political party or question on the ballot within 50 feet of the entrance(s) to the polling place. In addition, no person may conduct any form of poll or survey of voters within 50 feet of the entrance(s) to the polling place.⁴⁸

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

On Election Day, only an election official or a "watcher" designated by a political party can challenge a person's right to vote. Challenges must be made for a good cause. Whenever the identity of any person offering to vote is challenged at the polling place, that person may still vote using a provisional ballot.⁴⁹

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

Police officers and other peace officers shall be present at each polling place as may be requested by the local board.⁵⁰ However, voters have the right to vote without anyone intimidating them, trying to influence their vote or interfering with the process.⁵¹

***Note to hotline volunteer:** If hotline volunteers learn of police/members of the military at the polling place, they should notify their hotline captain immediately.

⁴⁶ R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-19-26.1.

⁴⁷ R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-19-26.

⁴⁸ R.I. Gen. Laws §§ 17-19-49, 17-23-15; R.I. Bd. of Elections, Rules & Regulations for Polling Place Conduct, 410 RICR 20-00-12, §12.6(A).

⁴⁹ R.I. Gen. Laws §§ 17-19-22, 17-19-24.1, 17-19-27; R.I. Bd. of Elections, Rules & Regulations for Polling Place Conduct, 410 RICR 20-00-12, §12.6(D).

⁵⁰ R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-19-21.

⁵¹ R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-19-49.

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

Rhode Island allows for same day voter registration for the Presidential Election and only for limited purposes.

If a voter's name does not appear on the certified voting list on Election Day at the district where they are, the voter can still cast a provisional ballot.⁵²

Before Election Day, if a voter's name does not appear on the preliminary list of registered voters for the polling place (an advertisement for a meeting where it will be discussed must be published in local newspapers at least 20 days before Election Day), the voter can appear at a meeting of the local Board and challenge the correctness of the preliminary registration list. The local Board must publish the notice of meeting in one or more newspapers having general circulation in the city or town at least 10 days prior to the meeting.⁵³ A voter may also appeal their removal from the registration list before Election Day.⁵⁴

In most instances, a voter's name cannot be removed from the list of registered voters unless election officials have reason to think the voter is ineligible, the voter receives a confirmation notice, and the voter does not respond to the notice and then fails to vote in two consecutive federal elections.⁵⁵

A voter's name can be removed from the list of registered voters immediately if the local Board receives notice that the voter is deceased.⁵⁶ The local Board may also remove a voter immediately if it receives a challenge to a voter's qualifications and confirms that the voter is ineligible. This can occur only if the local Board gives the challenged voter notice and holds a hearing at which the voter appears, and at which they may be questioned about the facts necessary to establish their eligibility. If the challenged voter does not appear at the hearing, the local Board will send the voter a confirmation notice, and if the voter does not respond to the notice and then fails to vote in two consecutive federal elections, the voter will be removed.⁵⁷

On Election Day, an election official or a "watcher" designated by a political party can challenge a person's right to vote.⁵⁸ Challenges must be made for a good cause.⁵⁹ Whenever the identity of any person offering to vote is challenged at the polling place, that person can still vote using a provisional ballot.⁶⁰

Note that voters can take steps to help to determine why a voter's name is not appearing on the list of registered voters:

- Check the voter's registration status using the Rhode Island Secretary of State's "Voter Information Center" [Website](#) to make sure they are registered to vote and at the right place.
- Has the voter moved recently? Could they be registered at an old address? Check the address on the Rhode Island Secretary of State's "Voter Information Center" [Website](#).

⁵² R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-19-24.1.

⁵³ R.I. Gen. Laws §§ 17-10-5(a), 17-10-6.

⁵⁴ R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-10-11.

⁵⁵ R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-9.1-26; R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-10-1(b).

⁵⁶ R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-10-1(c).

⁵⁷ R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-9.1-28; R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-9.1-26.

⁵⁸ R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-19-22.

⁵⁹ R.I. Bd. of Elections, Rules & Regulations for Polling Place Conduct, 410 RICR 020-00-12, §12.6(D).

⁶⁰ R.I. Gen. Laws §§ 17-19-24.1, 17-19-27.

- Has the voter changed their name recently, or could they be registered under a different name? Check that name (and any variations of the voter’s name, especially for hyphenated names, which sometimes trip up databases) on the Rhode Island Secretary of State’s “Voter Information Center” [Website](#).
- When/where did the voter register to vote? Was that before the deadline?

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

Ask why the voter was offered a provisional ballot. A voter should be offered a provisional ballot only when:

- The voter’s name is (i) not on the list of eligible voters for the polling place in which they are seeking to vote or (ii) is listed in another district of the city/town, and their registration cannot be verified while at the polling place;
- An election official or a designated party representative at the polling place asserts that the individual is not eligible to vote based on good cause;
- The voter does not have proper photo identification, as explained in Question 5 above;
- The official list of registered voters indicates the voter has applied for a mail/emergency ballot.⁶¹

Other than for these reasons, the voter should be able to cast a regular ballot.

If the voter casts a provisional ballot, remind the voter to ask a poll worker if any additional steps will be needed to make sure the ballot is counted. The voter should retain the provisional ballot receipt and receive a notice describing the process to determine if the provisional ballot is qualified.⁶² The voter has the right to present written evidence supporting the right to vote by no later than 4:00 p.m. on the day following the election to the local Board.⁶³

A voter can determine if their provisional ballot was counted by searching the status on the [provisional ballot website](#) 48 hours after the election.⁶⁴ The voter will need to have their provisional ballot ID number (printed on provisional ballot receipt) and last name in order to access the information. The voter can also contact the Board of Elections at (401) 222-2345.

Be sure to note that provisional ballots are a last resort as there are many circumstances in which they are not counted. For instance, the ballot will be disqualified if the voter is not registered in the city or town in which the vote is cast, or if the voter is casting a provisional ballot for lack of photo ID and fails to present proper ID to the local Board by 4:00 p.m. on the day following the election.⁶⁵

ACCESSIBILITY/ASSISTANCE

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

⁶¹ R.I. Gen. Laws § 17-19-24.1; R.I. Bd. of Elections, Rules & Regulations for Provisional Voting, 410-RICR-20-00-13, §13.5.1(A).

⁶² R.I. Bd. of Elections, Rules & Regulations for Provisional Voting, 410-RICR-20-00-13, §§13.5.2(A), 13.6.1(B).

⁶³ R.I. Bd. of Elections, Rules & Regulations for Provisional Voting, 410-RICR-20-00-13, §13.7(B).

⁶⁴ R.I. Bd. of Elections, Rules & Regulations for Provisional Voting, 410-RICR-20-00-13, §13.9(A).

⁶⁵ R.I. Bd. of Elections, Rules & Regulations for Provisional Voting, 410-RICR-20-00-13, §13.5.2(A).

Registered voters in Central Falls, Pawtucket, Providence, and Woonsocket will receive English and Spanish mail ballot applications per Voting Rights Act guidelines. Spanish applications are also available [online](#).

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

Rhode Island does not currently have curbside voting.

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

Yes.

QUESTIONS

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

The voter can contact either of the following Elections Information Hotlines:

- a. Rhode Island Department of State Elections Division via email at elections@sos.ri.gov or by phone at 401-222-2340, or
- b. State of Rhode Island Board of Elections via email at boe.elections@elections.ri.gov or by phone at 401-222-2345.