

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Illinois – General Election 2024

Last Updated: 10/24/2024

**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?

To be eligible to vote in Illinois a voter must:

- be a United States Citizen.
- be at least 18 years old on or before the date of the General or Consolidated Election (16 year olds may preregister to vote).<sup>1</sup>
- live in Illinois at least 30 days prior to Election Day.<sup>2</sup> (e.g., must have lived in Illinois as of Sunday, October 6, 2024 to vote in the 2024 General Election taking place on Tuesday, November 5, 2024)
- not be serving a sentence of confinement in any penal institution as a result of a conviction.

<sup>1</sup> 10 ILCS 5/3-6.

<sup>2</sup> 10 ILCS 5/3-1.

- not claim the right to vote anywhere else.<sup>3</sup>

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?](#)

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

- March 19, 2024, was the 2024 Primary Election
- November 5, 2024, is the 2024 General Election

Poll workers (election judges) may ask which ballot the voter wishes to vote on in a primary election, but poll workers should not intimidate voters or make them uncomfortable regarding their choice of ballot.

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

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

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

- Chicago residents: <https://chicagoelections.com/en/your-voter-information.html>
- Suburban Cook County residents: <https://www.cookcountyclerk.com/service/your-voter-information>
- Lake County residents: <https://www.lakecountyyil.gov/351/Voter-Power-for-Registered-Voters>
- Will County residents: <https://www.thewillcountyclerk.com/elections/voter-services/voter-lookup/>
- DuPage County residents: <https://www.dupageco.org/VoterLookup/>
- Kane County residents: <https://www.kanecountyclerk.org/Elections/Pages/Voter-Search.aspx>
- Kendall County residents: <http://kendall.il.electionconsole.com/voter-lookup.php>

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

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

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

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<sup>3</sup> <https://ova.elections.il.gov/>

- **In Person.** A voter may register in person at the County Clerk’s Office, Board of Election Commissioner’s Office, City and Villages Offices, Township Offices, schools, public libraries, military recruitment offices, and other locations designated by the election authority.<sup>4</sup>
- **By Mail.** A voter can register via mail by completing the Illinois Voter Registration Application (which can be downloaded, in English or Spanish, at <https://www.elections.il.gov/ElectionOperations/VotingRegistrationForms.aspx>) and mailing it to the State Board of Elections or appropriate county clerk or board of election commissioners (*i.e.*, if the voter lives in Springfield, the form would be mailed to the Sangamon County Clerk).<sup>5</sup>
- **Online.** A voter can register online on the Illinois State Board of Elections’ website (<https://ova.elections.il.gov/>) using an Illinois driver’s license or state ID card and the last four digits of their social security number.<sup>6</sup>

See [Question 5](#) for details on identification that may be required for each type of voter registration. For information on the different deadlines for each type of voter registration, see [Question 6](#).

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

The type of identification required to register to vote depends on how the voter is registering. Identification must not be expired.

**Online.** A voter registering online must provide (i) their full Illinois driver’s license or state identification card number, (ii) the last 4 digits of their social security number, and (iii) the date the Illinois driver’s license or state identification card was issued.<sup>7</sup> If the voter does not have a driver’s license or other state-issued ID, they must register by mail or in person.

**In Person.** A voter can register to vote in person at locations designated by the local election authority, at certain public facilities, or (depending on location and availability) with trained deputy registrars. A voter can also register to vote at an Illinois Secretary of State driver’s services facility when updating or getting a new driver’s license or state ID card. Two forms of identification, with at least one showing the voter’s current residence address, are needed when registering in-person. These forms of identification may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- driver’s license or state ID,
- social security, Medicare or Medicaid card,
- public aid identification card,
- utility bill,
- employee or student identification card,
- lease, mortgage, or deed to home,
- vehicle registration card,
- passport or military ID,
- insurance card,
- LINK/Public Aid/Department of Human Services card,
- Illinois FOID card,
- certain mail addressed to the voter, such as: bills or transcripts; bank statements, pay stubs, or pension statements; utility, medical, or insurance bills; or official mail from a government agency,

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<sup>4</sup> See <https://www.elections.il.gov/Downloads/ElectionOperations/PDF/RegisteringToVote.pdf>.

<sup>5</sup> 10 ILCS 5/1A-16(b).

<sup>6</sup> 10 ILCS 5/1A-16.5.

<sup>7</sup> 10 ILCS 5/1A-16.5(e); <https://www.elections.il.gov/Downloads/ElectionOperations/PDF/RegisteringToVote.pdf>

- report cards from school,
- credit or debit card, or
- a civic, union or professional association membership card.<sup>8</sup>
- For voters experiencing homelessness only, the identification verifying “current residence” must instead show evidence that they are able to receive mail at an address in the jurisdiction. This could be a piece of mail or a statement from someone else that authorizes the use of that mailing address.<sup>9</sup>

**By Mail.** A voter registering by mail must provide proof of identity by submitting their driver’s license number or social security number. If the voter registering by mail does not have a driver’s license or social security number and has never registered to vote in the jurisdiction before, the voter must submit the application with either: (i) a copy of a current and valid photo identification, or (ii) a copy of a current utility bill, bank statement, government check, paycheck, or other government document that shows the name and address of the voter.<sup>10</sup>

If a voter does not submit this information or if the State cannot verify a voter’s identification with what was submitted, the voter can provide identification either through mail or by bringing identification when they vote in-person.<sup>11</sup>

A voter must vote for the first time in person if the voter registered to vote by mail, unless the voter first provides the election authority with sufficient proof of identity and the election authority verifies the voter’s proof of identity.<sup>12</sup>

Sufficient proof of identity includes:

- a person’s driver’s license number or State identification card number;
- the last 4 digits of a person’s social security number;
- a copy of a current and valid photo identification;
- a copy of a current utility bill, bank statement, paycheck, government check, or other federal, state or local government document that shows the voter’s name and address;<sup>13</sup> or
- an identification card issued by a college or university plus either (i) a copy of the voter’s contract or lease for a residence or (ii) any postmarked mail delivered to the voter at their current address.<sup>14</sup>

*Note – if the voter is registering for the first time in a jurisdiction and is not able to send in the required identification information, they will be required to vote in-person the first time.<sup>15</sup> However, voters voting under the provisions of UOCAVA (see [Question 11](#) for details) and the Voting Accessibility for the Elderly and Handicapped Act do not have to vote in person for the first time after having registered by mail.<sup>16</sup>*

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<sup>8</sup> 10 ILCS 5/4-10; 10 ILCS 5/5-9; see

<https://www.elections.il.gov/Downloads/ElectionOperations/PDF/RegisteringToVote.pdf>; see also <https://chicagoelections.gov/voting/when-you-need-id-vote>.

<sup>9</sup> 10 ILCS 5/4-10; 10 ILCS 5/5-9.

<sup>10</sup> 10 ILCS 5/1A-16.

<sup>11</sup> 10 ILCS 5/1A-16.

<sup>12</sup> 10 ILCS 5/4-105; 10 ILCS 5/5-105; 10 ILCS 5/6-105.

<sup>13</sup> 10 ILCS 5/1A-16.

<sup>14</sup> 10 ILCS 5/4-105; 10 ILCS 5/5-105; 10 ILCS 5/6-105.

<sup>15</sup> 10 ILCS 5/4-105.

<sup>16</sup> HAVA 303(b)(3).

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?

**Online.** If a voter is registering online, the registration deadline is 16 days before the Election Date (so Sunday, October 20, 2024 at 11:59 PM for the 2024 General Election taking place on Tuesday, November 5, 2024).<sup>17</sup>

If voters miss the deadline, they may also register in-person during grace period registration (for more information on grace period registration and Same Day Registration, see [Question 7](#)).

**In Person.** A voter may register in person 28 days or more before the Election Date (Tuesday, October 8, 2024 for the 2024 General Election taking place on Tuesday, November 5, 2024).<sup>18</sup>

If voters miss the deadline, they may also register online ahead of the online registration deadline 16 days before the Election Date (so Sunday, October 20, 2024 at 11:59 PM for the 2024 General Election taking place on Tuesday, November 5, 2024).

A voter that misses the deadline for in person registration can still register in-person during grace period registration up to and including on election day (for more information on grace period and same day registration, see [Question 7](#)).

**By Mail.** If a voter is registering by mail, their application must be postmarked at least 28 days before the Election Date (Tuesday, October 8, 2024 for the 2024 General Election taking place on Tuesday, November 5, 2024).<sup>19</sup>

If voters miss the deadline, they may still register in-person during grace period registration (for more information on grace period registration and Same Day Registration, see [Question 7](#)).

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

Yes, voters can register or update their voter registration with “Grace Period Registration” which includes Election Day. For voters utilizing Grace Period Registration during Early Voting or on Election Day, this is often referred to as “Same Day Registration” or “Election Day Registration.” Election Judges on election day, in particular, might use any of these three terms.

Beginning 27 days before an election (Wednesday, October 9, 2024 onward for the 2024 General Election taking place on Tuesday, November 5, 2024) and through Election Day (“Grace Period Registration”), a voter may use Grace Period Registration to register to vote or update their voter registration.<sup>20</sup> A voter who registers to vote or changes their address during Grace Period Registration and wishes to vote in the election occurring during Grace Period Registration **must vote in person at the same time that they register or update their registration.**

Grace period registration is only available **in-person** at designated sites.

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<sup>17</sup> 10 ILCS 5/1A-16.5(l); <https://ova.elections.il.gov/>

<sup>18</sup> See <https://www.elections.il.gov/Downloads/ElectionOperations/PDF/RegisteringToVote.pdf>

<sup>19</sup> 10 ILCS 5/1A-16(b).

<sup>20</sup> 10 ILCS 5/4-50; 10 ILCS 5/5-50; see *Grace Period Registration and Voting*, found at

<https://www.elections.il.gov/VotingAndRegistrationSystems/EarlyVotingLocationsSearch.aspx>.



During Grace Period Registration, voters may register and vote:

- at the office of the election authority;
- at a permanent polling place established by the election authority;
- at any other early voting site (such as temporary polling places) beginning 15 days prior to the Election Date (beginning Monday, October 21, 2024 for the 2024 General Election taking place on Tuesday, November 5, 2024);
- at some polling places on Election Day;<sup>21</sup> or
- at a location specifically designated by the election authority.<sup>22</sup>

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

Grace Period Registration is provided for under Illinois law. In all counties, Grace Period Registration is required to be available in at least one location within the county, and in counties with population over 100,000 (including Cook County) and counties with electronic poll books, Grace Period Registration must be available in each polling place including on Election Day. Counties that include Grace Period Registration in each polling place include Brown, Bureau, Champaign, Cook (Chicago and suburban Cook County), DeKalb, DuPage, Grundy, Kane, Kankakee, Kendall, Lake, Macon, Madison, McHenry, McLean, Peoria, Rock Island, Sangamon, Stark, St. Clair (East St. Louis and the remainder of St. Clair County), Tazewell, Will, and Winnebago Counties, as well as Cities such as Bloomington, Chicago, East St. Louis, and Rockford. Voters using Grace Period Registration need to present two forms of ID, including one with a current address.<sup>23</sup>

For voters who live in a county with a population less than 100,000 that doesn't use electronic poll books AND that has decided not to allow Grace Period Registration at every polling place, the voter can use Grace Period Registration at a location that might be different county by county. At a minimum, the voter will be able to register at: (i) the county election office; and (ii) a polling place in each municipality where 20% of the county's residents reside if the election authority's main office is not located in that municipality.<sup>24</sup>

8. **PERMANENT MOVE: I have moved permanently and I didn't update my voter registration, can I vote?** In general, Illinois requires voters to be a resident of the state starting at least **30 days** prior to Election Day (e.g., must live in your Illinois precinct as of Sunday, October 6, 2024 to vote in the 2024 General Election taking place on Tuesday, November 5, 2024).<sup>25</sup>

If a voter moved into Illinois from out of state within the 30 days prior to the election, they are not eligible to vote in Illinois and should vote in the voter's previous state of residence until they have been in Illinois for 30 days.

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<sup>21</sup> 10 ILCS 5/4-50

<sup>22</sup> 10 ILCS 5/4-50; 10 ILCS 5/5-50; 10 ILCS 5/6-100.

<sup>23</sup> 10 ILCS 5/5-50.

<sup>24</sup> 10 ILCS 5/4-50; *see also*

<https://www.elections.il.gov/NewDocDisplay.aspx?%2fM0cs48zOKUVo8NHfKkNhVwyxu6isYxmi2awazxG5oLYFkE33dlxTqFgJUGePoYJyFoQzCF0NPPhk%2bkCUEtnMY7WNUFQszxqZr11BOvJRLIP2zT6ZXJbclYKdZmfwGaSpzZGLZmbg81%2ba%2bb9TFgJIWtvG9ayJ3e0>.

<sup>25</sup> 10 ILCS 5/3-1.

In general, Illinois also requires voters to be a resident of their election jurisdiction for at least **30 days** prior to Election Day (e.g., must live in the applicable election jurisdiction as of Sunday, October 6, 2024 to vote in the 2024 General Election taking place on Tuesday, November 5, 2024).<sup>26</sup> However, as long as the voter moved within the state of Illinois, they should be able to vote on a regular ballot; it may just have to be with a ballot based on their old voting precinct, as explained below.

*For all scenarios below, voters who are voting in person can vote at either (a) the appropriate precinct-based polling location based on the appropriate voter registration address or (b) a vote center, using a ballot based on the appropriate voter registration address.*

*If it is difficult to determine where a voter's appropriate polling place is, consider advising a voter to go to a vote center and bringing proof of their current address in case they need to update their registration.*

Recent Moves (i.e., within 30 days of Election Day):

- Voters that moved **within the same precinct and within 27 days** of Election Day (e.g., Wednesday, October 9, 2024 or later ahead of the 2024 General Election taking place on Tuesday, November 5, 2024) need only fill out an affidavit related to their address change, which will update their address for this and future elections.<sup>27</sup>
- In many jurisdictions (such as Chicago), if someone moved **within 30 days of Election Day** (e.g., Monday, October 7, 2024 or later ahead of the 2024 General Election taking place on Tuesday, November 5, 2024) and **stayed within the same election jurisdiction (but not the same precinct)**, a voter can go to the old precinct polling place or a vote center and vote with a regular ballot there after completing an affidavit.<sup>28</sup> A voter may be able to utilize Grace Period Registration to vote based on their new precinct but should consult with the election authority or its published election judge manual for the particular election jurisdiction.
- Voters that moved **within 30 days** of Election Day (e.g., Monday, October 7, 2024 or later ahead of the 2024 General Election taking place on Tuesday, November 5, 2024) to a **new election jurisdiction** can vote on a ballot based on their old address either at their old precinct polling place or at a vote center after completing an affidavit. A voter may be able to utilize Grace Period Registration to vote based on their new address. Consult with the election authority or its published election judge manual for the particular election jurisdiction.

Moves more than 30 days before Election Day:

- Voters that moved **30 or more days before** Election Day (e.g., on or before Sunday, October 6, 2024 ahead of the 2024 General Election taking place on Tuesday, November 5, 2024) within the **same election jurisdiction, and in the same precinct**, should update their registration ahead of the registration deadlines. If the voter did not transfer their registration, they may update their registration and vote through Election Day using Grace Period Registration and should vote with a ballot based on their new/current address at their new precinct polling place or at a vote center.

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<sup>26</sup> 10 ILCS 5/3-1.

<sup>27</sup> 10 ILCS 5/4-16; <https://www.elections.il.gov/Downloads/ElectionOperations/PDF/RegisteringToVote.pdf>

<sup>28</sup> See e.g., Chicago Board of Elections Frequently Asked Questions, available at <https://chicagoelections.gov/en/frequently-asked-questions.html>.

- Voters that moved **30 or more days before** Election Day (e.g., on or before Sunday, October 6, 2024 ahead of the 2024 General Election taking place on Tuesday, November 5, 2024) within the **same election jurisdiction, but outside their precinct**, should update their registration ahead of the registration deadlines and vote with a ballot based on their new/current address at their new precinct polling place or at a vote center. If the voter did not transfer their registration, they may update their registration and vote through Election Day using Grace Period Registration and should vote with a ballot based on their new/current address at their new precinct polling place or at a vote center.
- Voters that moved **30 days or more before** Election Day (e.g., on or before Sunday, October 6, 2024 ahead of the 2024 General Election taking place on Tuesday, November 5, 2024) **to a new election jurisdiction** (a new county or a new municipality with its own board of election commissioners) and did not transfer their registration can only vote by re-registering from their new address and must vote with a ballot based on their new/current address at their new precinct polling place or at a vote center.

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

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

A voter should vote at their address of **residence**, meaning their permanent address.<sup>29</sup> If the voter will be absent from that location only temporarily, the voter may request a vote-by-mail ballot. See [Question 32](#) for more details. If the voter has permanently moved, see [Question 8](#) to determine where the voter should vote. Sometimes, a voter may be unsure whether their move is temporary or permanent. If a voter considers their current living location their permanent residence, they may use Grace Period Registration or Election Day Registration to update their voter registration. See [Question 7](#).

Many voters may be experiencing housing insecurity or homelessness. This does not limit a person’s ability to vote. Under the Illinois Bill of Rights for the Homeless Act, any person experiencing homelessness who is residing in the State of Illinois has “the right to vote, register to vote, and receive documentation necessary to prove identity for voting without discrimination due to [their] housing status.”<sup>30</sup>

If a voter experiencing homelessness is registering to vote on Election Day, the voter must provide two forms of identification, with one including the address that the voter is using as a residence for the purpose of voting. To prove residency, a voter experiencing homelessness may show “a piece of mail addressed to that individual and received at that address” or produce “a statement from a person authorizing use of the mailing address.”<sup>31</sup> Examples of identification that can be used to prove the voter’s residency address include:

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

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<sup>29</sup> 10 ILCS 5/3-1; 10 ILCS 5/3-2.

<sup>30</sup> 775 ILCS 45/10(a)(5).

<sup>31</sup> 10 ILCS 5/4-10; 10 ILCS 5/5-9; 10 ILCS 5/6-37.

- An ID card issued by a homeless shelter showing the name and mailing address of the voter.

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

Yes. College students living in Illinois for school may vote at the address where they live while attending school, provided that they have been an Illinois resident for at least 30 days prior to Election Day (e.g., since Sunday, October 6, 2024 to vote in the 2024 General Election taking place on Tuesday, November 5, 2024). A student may consider themselves a resident of Illinois if the student is physically present in the state and intends to remain at their current residence or campus (this does not mean that the student intends to remain at the address forever or even after graduating). *If a student considers two locations their residence, the student may choose which one (but not both) to use as a voting residence.*

Students are held to the same eligibility requirements as any other voter in the jurisdiction. If a student is told that they are not able to vote, they should ascertain if they have fulfilled all of the registration requirements (i.e. citizenship, age, and durational residency requirements) and that they have properly registered for this election and tried Grace Period Registration if necessary.

If a college student is taking classes remotely (i.e., the student is taking remote classes offered by an Illinois university), the student still may register to vote in Illinois if they are also an Illinois resident. As described above, they would register to vote at the address of their residence, regardless of where they are taking remote classes.

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

Uniformed service members (and their eligible dependents) not in Illinois on Election Day and U.S. citizens living outside of the United States may request an absentee ballot under the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA). The voter can get step-by-step assistance and forms at <https://www.fvap.gov/illinois>, on the Illinois State Board of Elections website (<https://move.elections.il.gov/?Name=W9QmzPL1ChE0Bhad9QYeOdnB6s7h2EPlyFdDRgb9RVI%3d&T=637386276856237889>), or, for Chicago voters, on the Chicago Board of Election Commissioners website (<https://chicagoelections.com/en/military-overseas-voters.html>).

**Registration.** Registration/application for **unregistered** overseas civilian citizens **temporarily** residing outside the United States must be received by Monday, October 7, 2024, for the 2024 General Election taking place on Tuesday, November 5, 2024.<sup>32</sup>

**Ballot Request.** Overseas civilian citizens and absent uniformed service members and eligible family members must have their signed ballot requests received by Monday, October 28, 2024 for the 2024 General Election taking place on Tuesday, November 5, 2024.<sup>33</sup> Requests for ballots can be submitted online through the Illinois Military and Overseas Empowerment website at <https://move.elections.il.gov/Default.aspx?ReturnUrl=%2f> or through <https://www.fvap.gov/illinois>.

The Chicago Board of Elections offers military/overseas voters emailed ballots, mailed ballots, or an online ballot option (available at <https://chicagoelections.com/en/military-overseas-voters.html>). Any eligible military/overseas voter with a valid Federal Post Card Application on file with the Chicago Board

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<sup>32</sup> <https://www.fvap.gov/illinois>

<sup>33</sup> <https://www.fvap.gov/illinois>

of Elections may log into the online ballot option, after which the voter must print and mail the ballot and supporting documents to the Chicago Election Board.<sup>34</sup>

**Ballot Return** Ballots requested by overseas civilian citizens and absent uniformed service members and eligible family members pursuant to the above must be signed and postmarked by Tuesday, November 5, 2024, for the 2024 General Election taking place on Tuesday, November 5, 2024 and must be received by the election authority by the 14th day after the election.<sup>35</sup>

**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?](#)

Yes, a person that was convicted of a misdemeanor or felony can vote in Illinois unless the voter is currently confined under a sentence from a criminal conviction.

The only people in Illinois who CANNOT vote because of their criminal record are people who:<sup>36</sup>

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

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

However, others who have been convicted of a crime CAN vote, including people previously convicted of any felony or misdemeanor who are *not* currently serving a sentence of confinement. In Illinois, people on probation or parole can vote.<sup>37</sup>

After a person has served their sentence and is released from incarceration, they are again eligible to vote as soon as they are released but must re-register to vote. Illinois Department of Corrections and Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice are required to provide a nonpartisan peer-led civics program to soon-to-be-released citizens in their custody.<sup>38</sup> Upon release, a voter must be provided with information about their voting rights and a voter registration application.<sup>39</sup> If a voter was registered to vote before they were convicted to a sentence of confinement, their name will have been removed from the rolls, and the voter will need to register again. Refer to [Question 3](#) for more details on checking a voter's registration. See [Question 4](#) for more details on updating voter registration.

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

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

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<sup>34</sup> Chicago Board of Elections, *Military/Overseas Voters*, <https://chicagoelections.gov/en/military-overseas-voters.html>.

<sup>35</sup> <https://www.fvap.gov/illinois>

<sup>36</sup> 10 ILCS 5/3-5.

<sup>37</sup> 10 ILCS 5/3-5.

<sup>38</sup> 730 ILCS 200/10.

<sup>39</sup> 730 ILCS 5/3-14-1(a-3).

There are a number of situations where people who are detained are still eligible to vote. Voters who are detained in Illinois pre-trial pending acquittal or conviction of a crime may vote.<sup>40</sup> This is the case for most people detained in a jail (rather than a prison). Please note that even though voting is legally allowed, it may be difficult for voters held pre-trial to access this right. Voters who are incarcerated under a sentence of confinement as a result of a criminal conviction are ineligible to vote or register to vote.

In Cook County Jail, the Chicago Board of Elections and the Cook County Clerk's office must establish a temporary branch polling place during the Early Voting period.<sup>41</sup> Poll watchers are allowed to observe proceedings at the established temporary branch polling place.<sup>42</sup>

Election jurisdictions responsible for counties with a population under 3,000,000 (i.e., every Illinois election jurisdiction except Chicago Board of Elections and the Cook County Clerk's office) must collaborate with the primary county jail to facilitate voting by mail for voters who are detained pre-trial.<sup>43</sup> Jails in those jurisdictions may establish a polling place for people who are residents of the county in the jail where they are being detained.<sup>44</sup> As of 2023, the only county to voluntarily operate a temporary polling place in this manner in a jail is Will County, where the Will County Clerk's office operates a temporary polling place in the Will County Adult Detention Facility. Other facilities may be offering in person temporary polling places.

Anyone in custody in a county jail who is eligible to vote must be given a voter registration application if requested.<sup>45</sup> County jails must provide voter registration applications to anyone being discharged from the jail who is eligible to vote.<sup>46</sup>

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

Illinois does not have a process for challenging registrations. For instances of voters' qualifications being challenged while trying to vote in person, see [Question 72](#).

## HOW TO VOTE: ELECTION DAY

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

The 2024 General Election Day is on Tuesday, November 5, 2024.

The polls are required to be open from 6:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. on Election Day.<sup>47</sup> If a polling place is not open at 6:00 a.m., voters should stay at the polling location.

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<sup>40</sup> 10 ILCS 5/3-5.

<sup>41</sup> 10 ILCS 5/19A-20(e).

<sup>42</sup> 10 ILCS 5/19A-20(e).

<sup>43</sup> 10 ILCS 5/19-2.3.

<sup>44</sup> 10 ILCS 5/19A-20(e)(2)

<sup>45</sup> 55 ILCS 5/3-15003.3.

<sup>46</sup> 55 ILCS 5/3-15003.3.

<sup>47</sup> 10 ILCS 5/17-1.

All otherwise-qualified voters who are in line at the polling place at 7:00 p.m. must be allowed to vote a regular ballot. Voters must remain in line if they are in line when the polls close in order to vote.

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

All Illinois voters can check their polling places at <https://ova.elections.il.gov/PollingPlaceLookup.aspx>.

Many jurisdictions have their own polling place lookup as well, which may be more up-to-date.

In addition to precinct-based polling locations, each election authority must also establish at least one Vote Center location in the largest municipality within its jurisdiction where all voters are allowed to vote on Election Day regardless of the precinct in which the voter is registered.<sup>48</sup> In jurisdictions with a population of more than 500,000 inhabitants, the election authority must establish at least 2 Vote Centers.<sup>49</sup> All Vote Centers will allow curbside voting.<sup>50</sup>

Chicago has 50 Vote Centers on Election Day with one in each Ward in the City. Chicago uses the Ward-based Early Voting locations as Vote Centers.

There may be many last-minute polling place changes. Online polling place lookup tools are a good starting point but are not always updated in real time.

- The City of Chicago lookup tool (<https://chicagoelections.gov/en/your-voter-information.html>) or the Cook County Clerk's office polling place lookup tool (<https://www.cookcountyclerk.com/service/polling-places>) are often more accurate than the state-wide tool. Note that polling places may change year to year.
- For other jurisdictions, the state-wide tool may be more accurate than the local jurisdiction's tool; you can check on the Illinois State Board of Election's website, <https://ova.elections.il.gov/PollingPlaceLookup.aspx>, and enter the voter's address. Local jurisdiction websites also may list last-minute polling place changes without updating their search tools.
- Additionally, you can call the relevant election authority (contact list here: <https://www.elections.il.gov/ElectionOperations/ElectionAuthorities.aspx?MID=snNj91xBrk%3d&T=637934788419655534>) to learn the latest updates on polling place closures.

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

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

For the 2024 General Election taking place on Tuesday, November 5, 2024, voters are entitled to be absent from work for up to 2 hours between the opening and closing of polls, without penalty from their employer and without their pay getting docked, however:

- Employers may require that employees request this leave of absence prior to Election Day;
- Employers may specify the hours during which the employee is permitted to be absent to vote (which must be a 2-hour absence during working hours if the employee's working hours

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<sup>48</sup> 10 ILCS 5/11-8.

<sup>49</sup> 10 ILCS 5/11-8.

<sup>50</sup> 10 ILCS 5/11-8.

begin less than 2 hours after the opening of the polls and end less than 2 hours before the closing of the polls).<sup>51</sup>

Note, the 2024 General Election is a state holiday but private companies are not required to close for state holidays.<sup>52</sup>

**Student time off:** Beginning the 15th day before a general or special election (October 21, 2024, for the November 5, 2024 General Election), any student entitled to vote at such election shall be entitled to be absent from school for a period of 2 hours during the school day in order to vote. The school may specify the hours during which the eligible student may be absent. A student who is absent from school is not considered absent for the purpose of calculating enrollment under the School Code.<sup>53</sup>

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

Polls close in Illinois at 7pm.

**Voters should remain in line if they are in line when the polls close.** All otherwise-qualified voters who are in line at the polling place at 7:00 p.m. must be allowed to vote a regular ballot.

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

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

**Exceptions where identification is required:**

**Two forms of ID**, with at least one listing the voter's name and current address (or, in the case of voters experiencing homelessness, a mailing address used by the voter), are required for:

- Voters registering in person, including in the voter's home precinct using Grace Period Registration,<sup>55</sup>
- Voters filing an address change in person, including in the voter's home precinct using Grace Period Registration,<sup>56</sup>
- Voters filing a name change in person, including in the voter's home precinct using Grace Period Registration.<sup>57</sup>

**One form of ID** is required for:

- First-time voters in the jurisdiction who **registered by mail** but did not submit sufficient proof of identity (i.e., Illinois identification/driver's license number or Social Security number) with the

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<sup>51</sup> 10 ILCS 5/17-15.

<sup>52</sup> 10 ILCS 5/1-24.

<sup>53</sup> 10 ILCS 5/17-15(b).

<sup>54</sup> 10 ILCS 5/5-29. See also <https://chicagoelections.gov/en/when-you-need-id-to-vote.html>.

<sup>55</sup> 10 ILCS 5/4-50.

<sup>56</sup> 10 ILCS 5/4-50.

<sup>57</sup> A registered voter who changes their name by marriage or otherwise shall be required to "register anew" and authorize the cancellation of the previous registration, see, e.g., 10 ILCS 5/5-23, or if the voter whose name has changed still resides in the same precinct, the voter may vote after making the affidavit at the polling place regardless of when the change of name occurred, *id.*



registration application.<sup>58</sup> Note that these voters only need to provide (i) a copy of a current and valid photo identification or (ii) a copy of a current utility bill, bank statement, government check, paycheck, or other government document that shows the name and address of the voter. Please reference the list below for acceptable examples of proof of identity and address.

Some examples of acceptable IDs include:<sup>59</sup>

- Illinois driver's license or state ID card;
- Employee or student ID;
- Vehicle registration card;
- Credit card or debit card;
- Social Security, Medicare, or Medicaid card;
- Birth certificate;
- Insurance card;
- Civic, union or professional membership card;
- LINK/Public Aid/Department of Human Services card;
- Illinois FOID card;
- Valid US Passport or military ID; or
- Lease or rental contract, mortgage or deed to home.

Some examples of mail addressed to the voter that can be used as ID include:

- Utility, medical, or insurance bill in the voter's name;
- Bank statement, pay stub, or pension statement;
- Bill, transcript, or report card from school; or
- Official mail from any government agency.

If a voter's qualifications are challenged, the voter may be required to produce two forms of identification showing their current residential address, including not more than one piece of mail addressed to the voter at their current residence address and postmarked not earlier than 30 days before the date of the election (e.g., not earlier than Sunday, October 6, 2024, for the 2024 General Election taking place on Tuesday, November 5, 2024). Alternatively, voters may have a witness who is registered to vote in that precinct attest to the voter's qualifications and take an oath. In either case, the voter may then cast a regular ballot.<sup>60</sup>

Some jurisdictions (such as Lake County) may require that the voter present two forms of identification, both showing current name and physical street address, or a witness who is a registered voter residing in the same precinct if they are on the "inactive" voter list that may result from the U.S. Postal Service returning as undeliverable a voter verification postcard to the election authority.<sup>61</sup>

If a voter is unable to show identification when required—if the voter registered by mail without providing identification, was successfully challenged, is on the inactive list, or is using Grace Period

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<sup>58</sup> 10 ILCS 5/1A-16(a).

<sup>59</sup> In the past, some jurisdictions have asserted that both IDs must include the applicant's address. The Illinois Election Code, however, states that "the applicant [must] furnish two forms of identification, and except in the case of a homeless individual, one of which must include [their] residence address . . ." 10 ILCS 5/4-10; see also 10 ILCS 5/5-9; see also 10 ILCS 5/6-37. The Illinois State Board of Elections also explicitly states that one ID must include an address. Illinois State Board of Elections (<https://www.elections.il.gov/Main/FAQ.aspx#VoterRegistration>). Other authorities stating that "at least" one I.D. must have a resident's current address include the [Chicago Board of Election Commissioners](#), the [Cook County Clerk's Office](#), and [Lake County](#).

<sup>60</sup> 10 ILCS 5/17-10.

<sup>61</sup> See, e.g., <https://www.lakecountyil.gov/4113/Identification-for-Registration-and-Voti>.

Registration—the voter may vote by provisional ballot.<sup>62</sup> *However, if it is at all possible, a voter should be encouraged to go back and get an ID before entering the polls rather than cast a provisional ballot, because provisional ballots are not always counted promptly – and for the provisional ballot to count, the voter will have to later present ID at their local election office.*

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

Yes. In general, voters in Illinois do NOT have to provide identification at the polling place in order to vote a regular ballot. Instead, registered voters must fill out a form, including their signature. An Election Judge will verify that the voter’s signature matches the signature used by the voter for registration.<sup>63</sup> See [Question 19](#) for more information/exceptions.

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?

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

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

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

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

If that precinct does not offer Grace Period Registration, identify where in the county it is being offered (contact information for all jurisdictions available at <https://www.elections.il.gov/ElectionOperations/ElectionAuthorities.aspx>). The voter will need to arrive at the location offering Grace Period Registration before polls close.

In those situations, it may be the case that the location offering Grace Period Registration is not a polling place, and they may have to go to a separate polling place **before polls close** after registering. See [Question 7](#) for more information on Grace Period Registration.

If the voter is in the correct precinct but cannot use Grace Period Registration because of lack of ID, the voter can vote by provisional ballot. This is a ***last resort*** because provisional ballots will be counted only

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<sup>62</sup> 10 ILCS 5/18A-5.

<sup>63</sup> 10 ILCS 5/5-29. See also <https://chicagoelections.gov/en/when-you-need-id-to-vote.html>.

if the election jurisdiction can later verify that the voter was properly registered,<sup>64</sup> and they most likely will not be counted on Election Day. In most elections, if the voter uses a provisional ballot, the voter will have 7 days to bring adequate ID to their local election board.<sup>65</sup> Learn more about provisional ballot procedures in Questions 22-24.

Note that on Election Day voters MUST vote in their assigned polling place or a vote center. If a voter votes on a provisional ballot at an incorrect precinct-based polling place only the federal and statewide offices will be counted from their provisional ballot (assuming that the voter is otherwise eligible to vote).<sup>66</sup>

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

The voter should be offered a provisional ballot only when:

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

**Voters should use provisional ballots only as a last resort.** Provisional ballots will be counted only if the election authority can later verify that the voter was properly registered.<sup>67</sup> Provisional ballots often will not be counted on Election Day. Inquire why the voter was offered a provisional ballot and encourage the voter to take steps to be able to cast a regular ballot. If the voter is not correctly registered, the voter should be offered the opportunity to do Grace Period Registration (see [Question 7](#)) before being offered a provisional ballot.

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

If the voter uses a provisional ballot, the voter will have 7 days to provide any necessary documentation to their local election board.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> 10 ILCS 5/18A-5.

<sup>65</sup> 10 ILCS 5/18A-5(d).

<sup>66</sup> 10 ILCS 5/18A-15(b)(1).

<sup>67</sup> 10 ILCS 5/18A-5.

<sup>68</sup> 10 ILCS 5/18A-5(a)(7); 10 ILCS 5/18A-15.

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

**Voters should use provisional ballots only as a last resort.** Provisional ballots will be counted only if the election authority can later verify that the voter was properly registered.<sup>69</sup> Provisional ballots often will not be counted on Election Day. Inquire why the voter was offered a provisional ballot and encourage the voter to take steps to be able to cast a regular ballot. If the voter is not correctly registered, the voter should be offered the opportunity to do Grace Period Registration (see [Question 7](#)) before being offered a provisional ballot.

The voter should be offered a provisional ballot only when:

- The voter's voting status has been successfully challenged;
- A voter registered by mail but did not provide identification, it is that voter's first time voting in that precinct, they do not have sufficient ID with them at the polling place, and they are unable to go back to retrieve ID and return to the polling place;
- There is an active dispute about whether the poll should be open at that time, for example if parties are in the process of obtaining a court order extending the time for closing the polls;
- The person attempted to register to vote on Election Day, but failed to provide the necessary documentation;
- The voter's name appears on the list of voters who voted during the early voting period, even though the voter claims not to have voted during the early voting period; or
- In some limited cases where a voter received a vote-by-mail ballot but wishes to vote in person. Note that this is a rare circumstance and can likely be avoided. See [Questions 46, 47, or 48](#).

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

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

If the voter uses a provisional ballot, the voter will have 7 days to provide any necessary documentation to their local election board.<sup>70</sup>

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

If the voter uses a provisional ballot, the voter will have 7 days to provide any necessary documentation to their local election board.<sup>71</sup>

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

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<sup>69</sup> 10 ILCS 5/18A-5.

<sup>70</sup> 10 ILCS 5/18A-5(a)(7); 10 ILCS 5/18A-15.

<sup>71</sup> 10 ILCS 5/18A-5(a)(7); 10 ILCS 5/18A-15.

# **HOW TO VOTE: IN-PERSON EARLY**

## **VOTING**

**(in this state defined as: Early Voting )**

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

Yes. Registered voters may go in person to early voting sites established by the election jurisdiction or may go to the board of elections office to vote. The period for early voting begins 40 days prior to an election (e.g., beginning Thursday, September 26, 2024 to vote in the 2024 General Election taking place on Tuesday, November 5, 2024) and extends through the end of the day before Election Day.<sup>72</sup>

Many election jurisdictions provide several early voting locations; check the website of the specific jurisdiction for details on dates, times, and locations. Note that election jurisdictions in Illinois include each county and some additional city jurisdictions (like Chicago) that operate separately from the county they are in.

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

No. All voters in Illinois are eligible to vote before Election Day at any site established as an early voting site by the election authority. No special circumstances or reasons are necessary to vote early.<sup>73</sup>

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

In jurisdictions with permanent early voting locations, early voting begins at least 15 days prior to Election Day (e.g., Monday, October 21, 2024 to vote in the 2024 General Election taking place on Tuesday, November 5, 2024) and, in some jurisdictions as early as 40 days prior to Election Day (e.g., as early as Thursday, September 26, 2024 to vote in the 2024 General Election taking place on Tuesday, November 5, 2024), and extends through the end of the day before Election Day.<sup>74</sup> Many election jurisdictions provide several early voting locations; check the website of the specific jurisdiction for details on dates, times, and locations.

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

Many election jurisdictions provide several early voting locations; check the website of the specific jurisdiction for details.

A list of early voting hours and locations is expected to be available on the Illinois State Board of Elections' website ([www.elections.il.gov](http://www.elections.il.gov)) usually at least 10 days prior to the beginning of any early voting period. Voters can look up the locations of early voting polling places in their election jurisdiction

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<sup>72</sup> 10 ILCS 5/19A-15(a).

<sup>73</sup> 10 ILCS 5/19A-5.

<sup>74</sup> 10 ILCS 5/19A-15.

at the website for the local jurisdiction or on the State Board of Elections website at <https://www.elections.il.gov/VotingAndRegistrationSystems/EarlyVotingLocationsSearch.aspx>.

Note that election jurisdictions in Illinois are each of the counties and some additional city jurisdictions (like Chicago) that operate separately from the county they are in. Voters in Chicago can look up their early voting locations at <https://chicagoelections.gov/voting/early-voting>.

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

In general, voters in Illinois do NOT have to provide identification at the polling place in order to vote a regular ballot.<sup>75</sup> Instead, voters must fill out a form, which includes their signature. An Election Judge will verify that the voter's signature matches the signature used by the voter for initial registration.

There are exceptions to this:

**Two forms of ID**, with at least one listing the voter's name and current address (or, in the case of voters experiencing homelessness, a mailing address used by the voter), are required for:

- Voters registering in person, including in the voter's home precinct using Grace Period Registration;<sup>76</sup>
- Voters filing an address change in person, including in the voter's home precinct using Grace Period Registration;<sup>77</sup>
- Voters filing a name change in person, including in the voter's home precinct using Grace Period Registration.<sup>78</sup>

**One form of ID** is required for:

- First-time voters in the jurisdiction who **registered by mail** but did not submit sufficient proof of identity (i.e., Illinois identification/driver's license number or Social Security number) with the registration application.<sup>79</sup> Note that these voters only need to provide (i) a copy of a current and valid photo identification or (ii) a copy of a current utility bill, bank statement, government check, paycheck, or other government document that shows the name and address of the voter. Please reference the list below for acceptable examples of proof of identity or address.

Some examples of acceptable IDs include:<sup>80</sup>

- Illinois driver's license or state ID card;

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<sup>75</sup> See, e.g., <https://chicagoelections.gov/en/when-you-need-id-to-vote.html>.

<sup>76</sup> 10 ILCS 5/4-50.

<sup>77</sup> 10 ILCS 5/4-50.

<sup>78</sup> A registered voter who changes their name by marriage or otherwise shall be required to "register anew" and authorize the cancellation of the previous registration, see, e.g., 10 ILCS 5/5-23, or if the voter whose name has changed still resides in the same precinct, the voter may vote after making the affidavit at the polling place regardless of when the change of name occurred, *id.*

<sup>79</sup> 10 ILCS 5/1A-16(a).

<sup>80</sup> In the past, some jurisdictions have asserted that both IDs must include the applicant's address. The Illinois Election Code, however, states that "the applicant [must] furnish two forms of identification, and except in the case of a homeless individual, one of which must include [their] residence address . . ." 10 ILCS 5/4-10; 10 ILCS 5/5-9; 10 ILCS 5/6-37. The Illinois State Board of Elections also explicitly states that one ID must include an address. Illinois State Board of Elections, *Frequently Asked Questions*, <https://www.elections.il.gov/Main/FAQ.aspx#VoterRegistration>. Other authorities stating that "at least" one I.D. must have a resident's current address include the [Chicago Board of Election Commissioners](#), the [Cook County Clerk's Office](#), and Lake County.

- Employee or student ID;
- Vehicle registration card;
- Credit card or debit card;
- Social Security, Medicare or Medicaid card;
- Birth certificate;
- Insurance card;
- Civic, union or professional membership card;
- LINK/Public Aid/Department of Human Services card;
- Illinois FOID card;
- Valid U.S. passport or military ID; or
- Lease or rental contract, mortgage, or deed to home.

Some examples of mail addressed to the voter that can be used as ID include:

- Utility, medical, or insurance bill in the voter’s name;
- Bank statement, pay stub or pension statement;
- Bill, transcript or report card from school; or
- Official mail from any government agency.

If a voter’s qualifications are challenged, the voter may be required to produce two forms of identification showing their current residential address. One of the forms of ID may be a piece of mail addressed to the voter at their current residence address and postmarked not earlier than 30 days before Election Day (e.g., not earlier than Sunday, October 6, 2024 to vote in the 2024 General Election taking place on Tuesday, November 5, 2024). Alternatively, voters may have a witness who is registered to vote in that precinct attest to the voter’s qualifications and take an oath. In either case, the voter may then cast a regular ballot.<sup>81</sup>

Some jurisdictions (such as Lake County) may require that the voter present two forms of identification if they are on the “inactive” voter list, which may result from the U.S. Postal Service returning as undeliverable mail sent by the election authority.<sup>82</sup>

If a voter is unable to show identification when required—if the voter registered by mail without providing identification, was successfully challenged, is on the inactive list, or is using Grace Period Registration—the voter may vote by provisional ballot.<sup>83</sup> *However, if it is at all possible, a voter should be encouraged to leave the polling place and retrieve required ID rather than cast a provisional ballot, because provisional ballots are not always counted promptly – and, for the provisional ballot to later be counted, the voter will later have to go to their local election office and produce the required ID.*

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

A voter may instruct someone to assist them in marking their ballot. All that is required is that the voter exercises their physical abilities to their reasonable limit.<sup>84</sup>

Any voter who needs assistance voting is entitled to have any person of their choice – other than the voter’s employer, an agent of the employer, or an officer or agent of the voter’s union – mark the voter’s

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<sup>81</sup> 10 ILCS 5/17-10.

<sup>82</sup> See, e.g., <https://www.lakecountyiil.gov/4113/Identification-for-Registration-and-Voti>.

<sup>83</sup> 10 ILCS 5/18A-5.

<sup>84</sup> 10 ILCS 5/19-1.

choices or assist the voter in marking their choices on the ballot, as long as the voter makes the choices on the ballot and the person helping marks only the choices made by the voter.<sup>85</sup>

See Questions [77](#), [78](#), and [79](#) for more information.

## HOW TO VOTE: VOTE BY MAIL

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

Only Illinois voters who register for “permanent vote by mail” will be mailed a ballot automatically. All other voters must apply for vote by mail prior to the election in which they wish to vote by mail.

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

No. Any qualified voter in Illinois who is properly registered to vote may request a vote-by-mail ballot. No special circumstances or excuses are necessary.<sup>86</sup>

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

Voters may apply to vote by mail beginning not more than 90 days prior to Election Day (e.g., not before Wednesday, August 7, 2024 for applications to vote by mail in the 2024 General Election taking place on Tuesday, November 5, 2024) and may apply for vote by mail for a single election. Voters can apply for permanent vote-by-mail status year round or may apply for permanent vote-by-mail status (usually by simply checking a box on the form) when applying to vote by mail for an individual election.<sup>87</sup> Note, a vote-by-mail application that is made for a primary election ballot will require the voter to designate the name of the political party with which the applicant is affiliated.

**If the application is mailed or submitted electronically**, the applications must be received **no later than 5 days prior to Election Day** (e.g., no later than Thursday, October 31, 2024, for applications to vote by mail in the 2024 General Election taking place on Tuesday, November 5, 2024).

**If the application is delivered in person at the office of the election authority**, the application must be received **no later than one day prior to Election Day** (e.g., no later than Monday, November 4, 2024, for applications to vote by mail in the 2024 General Election taking place on Tuesday, November 5, 2024).<sup>88</sup>

Voters can obtain a vote by mail ballot application on the State Board of Elections website (<https://www.elections.il.gov/ElectionOperations/VotingByMail.aspx>). Chicago voters can obtain a vote

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<sup>85</sup> 10 ILCS 5/17-14.

<sup>86</sup> 10 ILCS 5/19-1.

<sup>87</sup> 10 ILCS 5/19-2.

<sup>88</sup> 10 ILCS 5/19-2; 10 ILCS 5/19-4.



by mail ballot at the Chicago Board of Election Commissioners' website (<https://chicagoelections.com/en/vote-by-mail.html>).

Voters who have previously applied for and been placed on permanent vote-by-mail status do not need to apply for any subsequent elections.

**34. APPLICATION ASSISTANCE:** Can someone assist me with filling out the application?

Yes, voters can have people assist them with filling out the vote by mail application.<sup>89</sup>

Additionally, voters with print disabilities may receive their vote by mail ballots through electronic transmission, which allows a voter with a print disability to mark and verify their vote by mail ballot using their own assistive technologies. Print disabilities are defined as a temporary or permanent physical or mental impairment (such as blindness, low vision, physical dexterity limitations, or learning or cognitive disabilities) which prevent the person from effectively reading, writing, or using printed material. Voters with print disabilities who wish to vote in this manner MUST complete an Accessible Vote by Mail application.<sup>90</sup> The applications are available to download at <https://www.elections.il.gov/electionoperations/VotingByMail.aspx> and should be sent to the election authority of their jurisdiction.

**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?

Vote-by-mail applications should be sent to the county clerk or board of election commissioners with jurisdiction over the voter. A completed application for a vote-by-mail ballot can be mailed, completed online, delivered in person to the local election authority, or (in some jurisdictions) emailed.<sup>91</sup> Anyone may turn in the completed application for a vote-by-mail ballot.<sup>92</sup>

The application does not have to be postmarked by a specific date. It must be received by the deadlines as outlined in [Question 33](#).

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

No. Voters are required to sign the outside of the ballot envelope, which serves as proof of identification.<sup>93</sup>

However, if the voter is not already registered to vote, they will have to register and provide the required information.

Voting by mail ballot can be requested on the local election authority's website. If the election authority does not have a voter's Driver's License, State ID number, or Social Security Number on file, the voter

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<sup>89</sup> 10 ILCS 5/19-4; 10 ILCS 5/17-14.

<sup>90</sup> 10 ILCS 5/19-2.6; <https://www.elections.il.gov/electionoperations/VotingByMail.aspx>

<sup>91</sup> 10 ILCS 5/19-2.

<sup>92</sup> 10 ILCS 5/19-3(e).

<sup>93</sup> 10 ILCS 5/19-6.

may need to update their registration by contacting the local authority. This is common for registered voters who have not changed their address or otherwise updated their registration materials for many years.

When requesting a vote-by-mail ballot on paper, the signature on the application will be compared to the signature on the originally completed voter registration card to ensure that they match.<sup>94</sup>

When returning a vote-by-mail ballot, the signature on the return envelope will be compared to the signature on the originally completed voter registration card to ensure that they match.<sup>95</sup>

**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 voter's ballot does not have to be sent to their home address. The vote-by-mail application contains one section for the voter to enter their Illinois address where they have lived for at least 30 days or more preceding the election, and a separate section where the voter may enter the address where they would like their ballot to be mailed, if different. The ballot may be mailed to a P.O. box.<sup>96</sup>

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

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

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

Voters should contact their local election authority to check the status of their mail application or ballot. Voters in Chicago can check the status of their vote-by-mail ballot at <https://chicagoelections.gov/voting/your-voter-information>.

**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?

Application Rejected

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

Ballot Rejected

A vote-by-mail ballot may be rejected:

- If the voter didn't sign the vote-by-mail ballot;

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<sup>94</sup> 10 ILCS 5/19-4.

<sup>95</sup> 10 ILCS 5/19-8(g).

<sup>96</sup> See, e.g., <https://chicagoelections.gov/voting/vote-mail>.

- If the election judge or official determines that the signature on the vote-by-mail ballot does not match the voter's signature;
- If the ballot envelope is open or has been opened and resealed;
- If the voter has already cast a ballot in person; or
- If the voter voted in person on election day or the voter is not a duly registered voter in the precinct.<sup>97</sup>

Additionally, ballots may be rejected if they are not postmarked by election day. However, a ballot delivered by mail but without a postmark will be accepted if it is received up to 14 days after the election.<sup>98</sup> See [Question 43](#) for more information about deadlines.

If a vote-by-mail ballot is rejected, the election authority will notify the voter with the reason(s) that their ballot was rejected within 2 days. The voter will have until the 14<sup>th</sup> day after the election (November 19, 2024 for the 2024 General Election) to show cause as to why the ballot should not be rejected. A reviewing panel of election judges will make a final determination as to the validity of the vote-by-mail ballot. If there is an issue with a signature, the voter will be given the opportunity to submit a statement that the ballot was completed and sent by the voter in order to have the ballot counted.<sup>99</sup>

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

Vote-by-mail ballots must contain signed and dated affidavits on the application and the ballot envelope where indicated, attesting to the accuracy of information provided on the application.<sup>100</sup> Instructions should appear in the information mailed from the election authority as well. The ballot may contain instructions on what color or type of ink to use when filling out the ballot. For instance, the Chicago Board of Elections has previously suggested not to use red ink because it is more difficult for ballot scanners to read.

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

Yes. A voter may instruct someone to assist them in marking their ballot. All that is required is that the voter exercises their physical abilities to their reasonable limit.<sup>101</sup>

Voters with print disabilities may receive their vote by mail ballots through electronic transmission, which allows a voter with a print disability to mark and verify their vote by mail ballot using their own assistive technologies. Print disabilities are defined as a temporary or permanent physical or mental impairment (such as blindness, low vision, physical dexterity limitations, or learning or cognitive disabilities) which prevent the person from effectively reading, writing, or using printed material. Voters with print disabilities who wish to vote in this manner **MUST** complete an Accessible Vote by Mail application.<sup>102</sup> The applications are available to download at <https://www.elections.il.gov/electionoperations/VotingByMail.aspx> and should be sent to the election authority of their jurisdiction.

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<sup>97</sup> 10 ILCS 5/19-8(g).

<sup>98</sup> 10 ILCS 5/19-8(c).

<sup>99</sup> 10 ILCS 5/19-8(g-5).

<sup>100</sup> 10 ILCS 5/19-6.

<sup>101</sup> 10 ILCS 5/19-1.

<sup>102</sup> <https://www.elections.il.gov/electionoperations/VotingByMail.aspx>

**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?

Vote-by-mail ballots must be postmarked by Election Day (e.g., postmarked by Tuesday, November 5, 2024 for the 2024 General Election) and received within 14 days of the election.<sup>103</sup> Ballots that arrive after Election Day without a postmark but within the 14-day period shall be assumed to have been mailed on the date certified by the voter on the ballot.<sup>104</sup>

Voters may deliver vote-by-mail ballots in-person to their election authority at their office. Election authorities may set up collection sites (sometimes known as drop boxes) where voters can return vote-by-mail ballots. Ballots returned to the collection sites can be returned up to the close of polls on Election Day.<sup>105</sup>

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

Voters can locate drop boxes for their jurisdiction at <https://www.elections.il.gov/VotingAndRegistrationSystems/VoteByMailBallotDropBoxLocations.aspx>. Not all counties in Illinois use drop boxes.

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

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

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

Yes. A voter may authorize any person to return their vote-by-mail ballot to the election authority, as long as the voter and the person delivering the ballot have signed the affidavit on the ballot envelope affirming that authorization was given to deliver the ballot.<sup>106</sup>

**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 the voter lost or spoiled their ballot, or received an incorrect one, they should contact their local election authority. If time permits, they may be able to receive a replacement ballot. If there is not sufficient time to deliver a new ballot, the voter can surrender the damaged or incorrect ballot at an early voting location or a precinct polling place on Election Day and vote in person.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> 10 ILCS 5/19-8; 10 ILCS 5/18A-15.

<sup>104</sup> 10 ILCS 5/19-8(c).

<sup>105</sup> 10 ILCS 5/19-6.

<sup>106</sup> 10 ILCS 5/19-6.

<sup>107</sup> 10 ILCS 5/17-9; 10 ILCS 5/18-5.

If the voter never received their vote-by-mail ballot, or if the voter completed and returned a vote-by-mail ballot but was informed that the election authority did not receive that vote-by-mail ballot, the voter may execute an affidavit in front of the election judges stating the circumstances and then may vote in-person on a regular ballot and not a provisional ballot.<sup>108</sup>

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

If the voter never receives the vote-by-mail ballot, the voter may vote in-person if the voter signs an affidavit stating that the voter never received a vote-by-mail ballot.<sup>109</sup> Voters should be given a regular ballot and not a provisional ballot in this circumstance.

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

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

The voter should take their vote-by-mail ballot with them to an early voting site or to their polling place on Election Day and surrender it to an election judge.<sup>110</sup> Their vote-by-mail ballot will be voided and they will receive a regular ballot.

If the voter never received their vote-by-mail ballot:

The voter may execute an affidavit in front of the election judges certifying that they have not received their ballot. The voter will then be issued a regular ballot and not a provisional ballot.<sup>111</sup>

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

If the voter received their ballot but lost it:

The voter may sign an affidavit certifying that they have not yet voted in this election. They will then be issued a provisional ballot.<sup>112</sup> See [Question 46](#) for more information about lost or spoiled ballots.

If the voter received their ballot and wishes to return in person:

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<sup>108</sup> 10 ILCS 5/17-9; 10 ILCS 5/18-5.

<sup>109</sup> 10 ILCS 5/17-9; 10 ILCS 5/18-5.

<sup>110</sup> 10 ILCS 5/17-9; 10 ILCS 5/18-5.

<sup>111</sup> 10 ILCS 5/17-9; 10 ILCS 5/18-5.

<sup>112</sup> 10 ILCS 5/18A-5(6).

See [Question 44](#) for information about ballot drop off locations.

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

If the voter completed and returned a vote-by-mail ballot but was informed that the election authority did not receive that vote-by-mail ballot, the voter may execute an affidavit in front of the election judges stating the circumstances and then may vote in-person on a regular ballot and not a provisional ballot.<sup>113</sup>

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

Additionally, if it is Election Day and the voter knows that their ballot has not been received (either by checking an online tool or by calling the election authority), some voters may be more comfortable going in-person to vote. Remember, in Illinois a vote-by-mail ballot will count so long as it is postmarked by Election Day and received by the election authority within 14 days of Election Day (which is November 19, 2024 for the November 5, 2024 General Election). ***A voter who has sent a vote-by-mail ballot does not need to vote in-person on Election Day unless they have reason to believe that their ballot will not be postmarked by Election Day or will not arrive within 14 days of Election Day.***

## HOW TO VOTE: ABSENTEE

(in this state defined as: Vote by Mail )

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

See [Question 32](#).

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?

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<sup>113</sup> 10 ILCS 5/17-9; 10 ILCS 5/18-5.

If a voter is admitted to a hospital, nursing home, or rehabilitation center 14 days or less before the election (e.g., October 22, 2024, for the November 5, 2024, for the 2024 General Election), and either (a) does not expect to be released on or before Election Day, or (b) if released, does not expect to be able to travel to the polling place on Election Day, then the voter can complete an application for Physically Incapacitated Elector to apply for a vote-by-mail ballot. The voter must contact their local election authority to request this form.

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

After the application is complete, any voter registered in the same precinct, or the voter's relative, can then hand deliver the application along with the Certificate of Attesting Health Care Professional to the voter's local election authority. The individual obtaining the ballot for the voter will also be required to attest that he/she has been authorized by the admitted voter to obtain his/her vote by mail ballot from the election authority. After reviewing the application, Certificate of Attesting Health Care Professional and affidavit of the individual obtaining the ballot on the voter's behalf, the election authority will provide the vote-by-mail ballot to the person who delivered the voter's application.

Once the voter receives the ballot, the voter should vote the ballot in secret and complete the certification on the absentee ballot return envelope. The voter should give their voted absentee ballot back to the person who delivered their application. This person must return the voter's completed ballot to their local election authority before 7 p.m. on election day.<sup>114</sup>

Please note that this process is difficult to navigate in practice.

The application for Chicago voters can be found at

[https://app.chicagoelections.com/Documents/general/Form502\\_G2022\\_English.pdf](https://app.chicagoelections.com/Documents/general/Form502_G2022_English.pdf).

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

**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](#).

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<sup>114</sup> 10 ILCS 5/19-13.

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?

Illinois utilizes Early Voting and does not refer to “in-person absentee” voting. See [Questions 25 through 30](#) for details about Early Voting.

## POLLING PLACE ISSUES

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

There may be last-minute polling place changes. Online polling place lookup tools are a good starting point but are not always updated in real time.

The City of Chicago lookup tool: (<https://chicagoelections.gov/en/your-voter-information.html>)



Cook County Clerk's office polling place lookup tool:  
<https://www.cookcountyclerk.com/service/polling-places>)

The Chicago/Cook County tools are often more accurate than the state-wide tool. However, for other jurisdictions, the state-wide tool may be more accurate than the local jurisdiction's tool; you can check on the Illinois State Board of Election's website, <https://ova.elections.il.gov/PollingPlaceLookup.aspx>, and enter the voter's address. Local jurisdiction websites also may list last-minute polling place changes without updating their search tools. Additionally, voters can contact the relevant election authority to learn the latest updates on polling place closures.

Each election jurisdiction will have at least one Vote Center where any voter within the jurisdiction may vote, regardless of their assigned precinct.<sup>115</sup> Additionally, for jurisdictions with more than 500,000 people (e.g., Chicago and Cook County), there must be at least two Vote Centers.<sup>116</sup> See [Question 16](#) for more information on Vote Centers.

The polls must be open from 6:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. on Election Day.<sup>117</sup> If a polling place is not open at 6:00 a.m., voters should remain at the polling location or go to the Vote Center.

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

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?

If the line at a polling place seems exceptionally long, voters should determine if there is a problem at the polling place (for example: a polling place running out of ballots), or if the line is long simply because there are a large number of voters.

Each election jurisdiction will have at least one Vote Center where any voter within the jurisdiction may vote, regardless of their assigned precinct.<sup>118</sup> Additionally, for jurisdictions with more than 500,000 people (e.g., Chicago and Cook County), there must be at least two Vote Centers.<sup>119</sup>

Additionally, voters with a disability or other voters who may have difficulty standing for long periods of time should ask a poll worker for accommodations.

The polls must be open from 6:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. on Election Day.<sup>120</sup>

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

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

Voters should immediately notify the poll workers if the voting equipment breaks down. Encourage the poll workers to call in the problem to the local election authority. If the problem cannot be fixed in a

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<sup>115</sup> 10 ILCS 5/11-8.

<sup>116</sup> *Id.*

<sup>117</sup> 10 ILCS 5/17-1.

<sup>118</sup> 10 ILCS 5/11-8.

<sup>119</sup> *Id.*

<sup>120</sup> 10 ILCS 5/17-1.

timely manner, and the breakdown is keeping the voter from casting a ballot, the voter should ask for a paper ballot. Voters should NOT cast a provisional ballot, because provisional ballots are not always counted promptly.

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

Electioneering, soliciting votes, and engaging in political discussions are banned within 100 feet of all polling places.<sup>121</sup> The 100-foot radius should be marked with two or more cones, small United States flags, or other markers.<sup>122</sup> The area within the markers is designated a “campaign free zone.”<sup>123</sup> For polling places in churches or private schools, the church or private school may choose to instead designate their entire property as “campaign free.”<sup>124</sup>

Electioneering includes providing campaign materials, displaying signs, banners or literature, or attempting in any other way to try to influence or solicit voters/votes.

The area on polling place property that is outside of the “campaign free zone” is a public forum for the duration of time that the polling place is open, and electioneering (including placement of signs) is allowed.<sup>125</sup>

Furthermore, “no person shall interrupt, hinder or oppose any voter while approaching within those areas for the purpose of voting.”<sup>126</sup>

Candidates, campaigns, and partisan pollwatchers may try to pressure voters inside the polling place, but such actions are not permitted and should be reported to election judges/poll workers.

Pollwatchers (who might be there on behalf of a nonpartisan organization, political party, or candidate) may not be so close to election judges or poll workers so as to “interfere with the orderly conduct of the election.” Additionally, pollwatchers are not permitted to handle election materials.<sup>127</sup>

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

Voters should refrain from wearing or carrying clothing, buttons, stickers, pins, or other material related to candidates. Furthermore, a voter should also refrain from letting other people in the polling place see their ballot, unless that person is assisting them.

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<sup>121</sup> 10 ILCS 5/17-29.

<sup>122</sup> *Id.*

<sup>123</sup> *Id.*

<sup>124</sup> *Id.*

<sup>125</sup> *Id.*

<sup>126</sup> *Id.*

<sup>127</sup> 10 ILCS 5/7-34; 10 ILCS 5/17-23

Illinois law creates penalties for broadcasting or marking a ballot in a way that can be observed by others.<sup>128</sup> Voters should be advised to not take any photos inside the polling location, and in particular should not take pictures of their ballot.

Additionally, taking photographs inside a polling place may contribute to a hostile environment, depending on the context and actions of the person taking the photo. In some cases, this could be intentional intimidation or could be perceived by another voter as intimidating conduct.

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

Poll workers are required to administer the elections fairly and according to the Election Code and the rules and regulations set forth by their local election authority.

Additionally, poll workers are subject to the same restrictions regarding electioneering, attire, soliciting votes, and political discussion that all other people in the polling place are subject to. See [Question 68](#).

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?

Voter intimidation is prohibited in all instances, including at the polling place. Intimidation can take many forms and should be handled carefully to ensure that voters are not prevented from voting while ensuring that the situation does not escalate.

Illinois law defines “prevention of voting” (i.e., intimidation) as: “Any person who, by force, intimidation, threat, deception or forgery, knowingly prevents any other person from (a) registering to vote, or (b) lawfully voting, supporting or opposing the nomination or election of any person for public office or any public question voted upon at any election.”<sup>129</sup>

In many cases, voters may feel that conduct is threatening or otherwise intimidating, but it may not be clearly addressed in the law.

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

Voters may be challenged by election judges, other registered voters in the voting site, or poll-watchers with valid credentials.

Three of the most common reasons a voter could be challenged include:

- The challenger believes a voter no longer resides at the registration address
- The challenger believes a voter is not the person they claim to be
- The voter’s signature appears substantially different on the ballot application and voter registration record

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<sup>128</sup> 10 ILCS 5/29-9 (“Except as permitted by this Code, any person who knowingly marks his ballot or casts his vote on a voting machine or voting device so that it can be observed by another person, and any person who knowingly observes another person lawfully marking a ballot or lawfully casting his vote on a voting machine or voting device, shall be guilty of a Class 4 felony.”).

<sup>129</sup> 10 ILCS 5/29-4.

If there is a challenge, voters may be required to sign a sworn affidavit that they are qualified to vote AND either:

- Provide two forms of valid identification, with one showing current residential street address, or
- Provide a witness who is a registered voter residing in the same precinct.<sup>130</sup>

If a voter's qualifications are challenged and they are unable or unwilling to do any of the above, they may be given a provisional ballot and instructions on how to ensure their vote is counted.<sup>131</sup>

See [Questions 22-24](#) for more information about provisional ballots.

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

Polling places are in a variety of buildings, some of which may employ private security guards, may have state or local law enforcement, or may be in a police station. While the presence of law enforcement in these situations may be required by the building, voters should be able to vote without feeling intimidated.

Federal law prohibits the military from being deployed to polling locations.<sup>132</sup>

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

A voter's name can be removed from the list of registered voters if the voter has failed to respond to an official election mailing AND has not voted in the past four years. If the voter has not voted in four years, the election authority must provide them with notice before taking any action; if the voter then does not respond within 30 days, their name may be removed.<sup>133</sup> Voters are also removed from the list of registered voters when they begin serving a sentence of confinement for a criminal conviction.<sup>134</sup>

Occasionally, a voter's name is mistakenly removed from the rolls even though that voter may never have received proper notification of removal. If the voter would like to have their name put back on the rolls, they can send that request via letter to the election jurisdiction (such as the county clerk or Board of Elections) within two years of cancellation with documentation that they are a qualified voter; after that two-year period, they must re-register.<sup>135</sup>

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

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

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<sup>130</sup> 10 ILCS 5/17-10.

<sup>131</sup> 10 ILCS 5/18A-5.

<sup>132</sup> 18 U.S.C. § 592.

<sup>133</sup> See 10 ILCS 5/4-17.

<sup>134</sup> See Ill. Admin. Code tit. 26, § 216.50.

<sup>135</sup> 10 ILCS 5/4-17.

See info in the [How to Vote: Election Day](#) Section.

*Voters should use provisional ballots only as a last resort.* Provisional ballots will be counted only if the election authority can later verify that the voter was properly registered.<sup>136</sup> Provisional ballots often will not be counted on Election Day. Inquire why the voter was offered a provisional ballot. If the voter is not correctly registered, the voter should be offered the opportunity to do Grace Period Registration (see [Question 6](#) and [Question 7](#)) before being offered a provisional ballot.

The voter should be offered a provisional ballot only when:<sup>137</sup>

- The person's name does not appear on the official list of registered voters for the precinct in which the person seeks to vote and the person has refused the opportunity to register at the polling location;
- The voter's voting status has been challenged and the challenge has been sustained by a majority of election judges;
- It is the voter's first time voting in that precinct, they did not provide identification when registering by mail, they do not have sufficient ID with them at the polling place, and they are unable to go back to retrieve ID and return to the polling place;
- The person attempted to register to vote on Election Day, but failed to provide the necessary documentation;
- There is an active dispute about whether the polling location should be open at that time, for example if parties are in the process of obtaining a court order extending the time for closing the polls;
- The voter's name appears on the list of voters who voted during the early voting period, even though the voter claims not to have voted during the early voting period; or
- The voter received a vote-by-mail ballot but did not return the vote-by-mail ballot to the election authority and was not able to vote through the procedures mentioned in [Questions 40, 46, or 47](#).

Other than for these reasons, the voter should be able to cast a regular ballot. *A provisional ballot should be a last resort.* An individual found eligible to cast a provisional ballot must sign an affidavit stating that the individual is an eligible voter in the jurisdiction.<sup>138</sup>

If the voter uses a provisional ballot because they attempted to register to vote on election day but failed to provide the necessary documentation, the voter must provide any necessary documentation to their local election board within 7 days of election day.<sup>139</sup> Voters should be encouraged to try and get the necessary documents and returning to the polling place before casting a provisional ballot.

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

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<sup>136</sup> 10 ILCS 5/18A-5.

<sup>137</sup> 10 ILCS 5/18A-5(a).

<sup>138</sup> 10 ILCS 5/18A-5(b)(2)(i).

<sup>139</sup> 10 ILCS 5/18A-5(a)(7); 10 ILCS 5/18A-15.

# ACCESSIBILITY/ASSISTANCE

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

Before using the voting machine, a voter can request that election judges or poll workers provide instructions on how to use the machine.<sup>140</sup> For assistance with an electronic machine, a voter can ask for further instructions from election judges or poll workers. Any such instructions must be given in a manner that may be observed by other persons in the polling place.<sup>141</sup> Note that, for electronic machines, instructions must be given prior to the voter entering the voting booth and an election judge or poll worker may not enter the voting booth with the voter.<sup>142</sup>

If a jurisdiction still uses *mechanical* voting machines, an instruction model for each mechanically-operated machine can also be provided for demonstration, showing a portion of the face of the voting machine.<sup>143</sup>

A voter may also ask for a paper ballot if they prefer that instead of a voting machine.

## **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?

Illinois law requires that each polling place be accessible to voters with disabilities unless the polling place is granted an exemption by the State Board of Elections,<sup>144</sup> but in practice many polling places may not be sufficiently accessible. A voter who has a disability and is assigned to a polling place that is inaccessible to them is entitled to be provided a ballot up to 50 feet from the entrance to the polling place (often called "curbside voting").<sup>145</sup> Such request shall be made to the election authority no later than the close of business at the election authority's office on the day before the election.<sup>146</sup> See [Question 80](#) for information about curbside voting.

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

## **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. Any voter who needs assistance voting is entitled to have any person of their choice – other than the voter's employer, an agent of the employer, or an officer or agent of the voter's union – mark the voter's choices or assist the voter in marking their choices on the ballot, as long as the voter makes the choices on the ballot and the person helping marks only the choices made by the voter.<sup>147</sup> The person assisting can be a friend or family member, for example, and the assister is not required to be a registered voter.

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<sup>140</sup> 10 ILCS 5/24A-5.1.

<sup>141</sup> 10 ILCS 5/24A-5.1.

<sup>142</sup> 10 ILCS 5/24A-5.1.

<sup>143</sup> 10 ILCS 5/24A-5.1.

<sup>144</sup> 10 ILCS 5/11-4.2(a).

<sup>145</sup> 10 ILCS 5/17-13(b).

<sup>146</sup> Id.

<sup>147</sup> 10 ILCS 5/17-14.

The voter will, and the assister may, be required to sign an affidavit form provided by the election judge/poll worker.<sup>148</sup>

There may be situations where the voter wants an election judge/poll worker or a poll watcher to serve as an assister. Election Judges and poll workers are allowed to assist, so long as two poll workers of two different political parties assist.<sup>149</sup> There have been instances where partisan poll watchers have inappropriately pressured voters while “assisting” them, as well as instances where election judges have been suspicious of poll watchers assisting voters.

In many jurisdictions, the federal Voting Rights Act requires polling places to provide written translations and oral interpretation (i.e., bilingual election judges/poll workers) in other languages.<sup>150</sup> In Illinois, the federal Voting Rights Act requires Chicago, suburban Cook County, DuPage County, Lake County, Kane County, and Will County to provide written translations and oral interpretation (bilingual election judges/poll workers) in *Spanish*. Chicago and suburban Cook County are also required to provide written translations and oral interpretation in some South Asian languages (including Sikh) and Chinese (including Taiwanese).<sup>151</sup>

In Chicago and suburban Cook County, federal law requires written and oral assistance in Chinese and Hindi; and oral assistance in Gujarati and Urdu. Additionally, local law in suburban Cook County also requires paper, electronic, audio, and vote-by-mail ballots in Korean, Tagalog, Polish, Russian, Ukrainian, Gujarati, Urdu, and Arabic.<sup>152</sup>

In practice, this means that in parts of the City of Chicago and suburban Cook County, written and oral assistance is required in Chinese and Hindi; and oral assistance is required in Gujarati and Urdu. There should also be resources for Chicago voters needing assistance in Korean and Tagalog. Additional details are available here, including about additional language resources available to Chicago voters beyond the minimum legal requirements: <https://www.chicagoelections.gov/voting/language-access-resources>

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

**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?**

Yes. Any voter who needs assistance voting is entitled to have any person of their choice – other than the voter’s employer, an agent of the employer, or an officer or agent of the voter’s union – mark the voter’s choices or assist the voter in marking their choices on the ballot, as long as the voter makes the choices on the ballot and the person helping marks only the choices made by the voter. See [Question 78](#) above for more details.

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<sup>148</sup> 52 U.S.C. 10508; 10 ILCS 5/17-14; *see also* *McCreery v. Burnsmier*, 293 Ill. 43, 51 (1920).

<sup>149</sup> 10 ILCS 5/17-14.

<sup>150</sup> 52 U.S.C. 10503; Fed. Reg. Vol. 86 No. 233 Dec. 8, 2021, <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2021-12-08/pdf/2021-26547.pdf>.

<sup>151</sup> [https://www.justice.gov/crt/page/file/1460416/dl?inline=.](https://www.justice.gov/crt/page/file/1460416/dl?inline=)

<sup>152</sup> *See* Cook County Code of Ordinances, Chapter 22, Article 3.

[https://library.municode.com/il/cook\\_county/codes/code\\_of\\_ordinances?nodeId=PTIGEOR\\_CH22EL\\_ARTIILAACEL](https://library.municode.com/il/cook_county/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=PTIGEOR_CH22EL_ARTIILAACEL).

There may be situations where the voter wants an election judge/poll worker or a poll watcher to serve as an assister. Election Judges and poll workers are allowed to assist, so long as two poll workers of different political parties assist. There have been instances where partisan poll watchers have inappropriately pressured voters while “assisting” them, as well as instances where election judges have been suspicious of poll watchers assisting voters.

In many jurisdictions, the federal Voting Rights Act requires polling places to provide written translations and oral interpretation (i.e., bilingual election judges/poll workers) in other languages.<sup>153</sup> In Illinois, the federal Voting Rights Act requires Chicago, suburban Cook County, DuPage County, Lake County, Kane County, and Will County to provide written translations and oral interpretation (bilingual election judges/poll workers) in *Spanish*. Chicago and suburban Cook County are also required to provide written translations and oral interpretation in some South Asian languages (including Sikh) and Chinese (including Taiwanese).

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

In practice, this means that in parts of the City of Chicago and suburban Cook County, written and oral assistance is required in Chinese and Hindi; and oral assistance is required in Gujarati and Urdu. There should also be resources for Chicago voters needing assistance in Korean and Tagalog. Additional details are available here, including about additional language resources available to Chicago voters beyond the minimum legal requirements: <https://www.chicagoelections.gov/voting/language-access-resources>

In Chicago, suburban Cook County, and some other jurisdictions, touchscreen machines with additional language options might be available and, even if no assistance is available in person, election judges/poll workers can call their central election office to help a voter obtain language assistance over the phone. Voters can be referred to appropriate language-specific hotlines: 888-VE-Y-VOTA (Spanish), 888-API-VOTE (Asian/Pacific Islander languages), or 844-YALLA-US (Arabic).

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

Any voter with a disability who is unable to enter their assigned polling place because of structural features of the building, may request curbside voting.<sup>154</sup> The request is required to be made to the local election authority not later than the close of business on the day before the election.<sup>155</sup> ***Missing that deadline does not mean that assistance cannot be provided.***

If a voter needs curbside voting assistance on Election Day, two judges of different political parties may meet the voter within 50 feet of the polling place entrance. The two judges must bring an Application for Ballot (in Chicago, “Form 14”); a ballot; a ballot marker; and a curbside privacy sleeve.<sup>156</sup>

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<sup>153</sup> 52 U.S.C. 10503; Fed. Reg. Vol. 86 No. 233 Dec. 8, 2021, <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2021-12-08/pdf/2021-26547.pdf>.

<sup>154</sup> 10 ILCS 5/17-13(b).

<sup>155</sup> 10 ILCS 5/7-47.1.

<sup>156</sup> *Id.* Note that the statute states this must be provided, “weather permitting” – it is not clear what the criteria is for determining whether current weather is not permitting.



In addition to mandatory curbside voting for voters with a disability, election authorities may (but do not have to) expand curbside voting to apply to all voters.<sup>157</sup>

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

Yes. Voters are allowed to bring any written or printed materials to assist them in the voting process. This includes notes, a voter's guide, or a sample ballot, whether in hard copy or viewed on a mobile phone. Voters cannot bring campaign signs or pamphlets or wear campaign clothing, buttons, or stickers. See [Question 69](#) for more information.

## **STATE SPECIFIC SUPPLEMENT**

**82. GUNS IN POLLING LOCATION:** Can someone carry a gun into a polling location?

While there is not an outright ban on guns in polling locations under Illinois law, the below places prohibit individuals from knowingly carrying a firearm onto the premise or into such places, many of which are locations where polling occurs:<sup>158</sup>

- Building, real property and parking area under the control of a public or private elementary or secondary school;
- Any building or portion of a building under the control of a unit of local government;
- Any real property, including parking areas, sidewalks and common areas under the control of a public or private community college, college or university.

See [Question 71](#) for more information related to Voter Intimidation.

**83. PRE-REGISTERING TO VOTE:** I'm 16 years old. Can I pre-register to vote?

A person who is otherwise qualified to vote may pre-register to vote on or after that person's 16th birthday. However, they will only be able to vote in a General or Consolidated Election if they turn 18 by Election Day. A person who is 17 may vote in a Primary Election if they turn 18 on or before the date of the General Election.<sup>159</sup>

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

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

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

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<sup>157</sup> 10 ILCS 5/17-13.5.

<sup>158</sup> 430 ILCS 66.65.

<sup>159</sup> 10 ILCS 5/3-6.

Chicago voters can call the Chicago Board of Elections at 312-269-7900. For specific numbers relating to Polling Places, Vote By Mail, Voter Registration, and more, please visit <https://chicagoelections.gov/about-board/contact-us>.

Suburban Cook County voters can call the Suburban Cook County Elections Department at 312-603-0906, Vote By Mail at 312-603-0944, and Voting Accessibility and Assistance at 312-603-0987.