

The Basics of Voting: Registration, Education, & Accommodations



How to register to vote: Online

1) You may register to vote online.

- In order to register to vote online, you must have a signature on file with the Registry of Motor Vehicles.
- If you currently have a Massachusetts driver's license or state ID card, you may use the online voter registration application to register, update your address, or change your party affiliation.
- Voter registration forms submitted online must be submitted by midnight on the date of the voter registration deadline.

How to register to vote: By mail

2) You may register to vote by mail.

- If you do not qualify to register to vote online, or if you would prefer to register by mail, you may download the voter registration form available on the Elections Division webpage.
- The form must be completed, signed, and delivered to your local election official.
- Voter registration forms submitted by mail must be postmarked no later than the voter registration deadline.

How to register to vote: In person

3) You may register to vote in person.

- If you would like to register in person, you may do so at any local election office, as well as the Elections Division of the Secretary of the Commonwealth's office (1 Ashburton Place, #1705, Boston, MA 02108).
- Voter registration is also available as part of every transaction at the Registry of Motor Vehicles and at certain public assistance agencies.
- Voter registration forms completed in person are valid as of the day that they are signed.

Voter Registration Form: Step by Step

Print all information in black ink. Follow above instructions for proper delivery.

1	Check one: Are you a Citizen of the United States of America? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No NOTE: If you checked "no," do not complete this form.		
2	Full name:	<i>last name</i>	<i>first name</i> <i>middle name or initial</i> <i>Jr. Sr. II III IV</i> <i>(circle one if appropriate)</i>
3	Former name:	<i>last name</i>	<i>first name</i> <i>middle name or initial</i> <i>Jr. Sr. II III IV</i> <i>(circle one if appropriate)</i>
4	Address where you live now (<i>street number / street name / rural route number & box number / apartment number / city or town / zip code</i>):		
5	Address where you receive all your mail (if different from #4):		
6	Date of birth: <i>month day year</i>	7 Identification #: <i>license # or last 4 digits of SSN</i>	8 Telephone (optional): <input type="checkbox"/> Check if unlisted
9	Party enrollment or designation (check one): <input type="checkbox"/> Democratic <input type="checkbox"/> Republican <input type="checkbox"/> Libertarian <input type="checkbox"/> No Party (<i>unenrolled</i>) <input type="checkbox"/> Political Designation (<i>not a political party</i>):		
10	Address at which you were last registered to vote (<i>street number / street name / rural route number & box number / apartment number / city or town / zip code</i>):		
11	If the applicant is unable to sign this form, give the name, address and telephone number (optional) of the person helping the applicant: <i>name</i> <i>address</i> <i>telephone number (optional)</i>		
12	I hereby swear (affirm) that I am the person named above, that the above information is true, that I AM A CITIZEN OF THE UNITED STATES, that I am at least 16 years old and I understand that I must be 18 years old to be eligible to vote, that I am not a person under a guardianship which prohibits my registering to vote, that I am not temporarily or permanently disqualified by law from voting because of corrupt practices in respect to elections, that I am not currently incarcerated for a felony conviction, and that I consider this residence to be my home. Signed under the penalty of perjury.		
13	Today's date: <i>month day year</i>	14 Signed: <i>Sign your name here.</i>	

Voter Registration: Housing Insecurity or Houselessness

- **Persons who are experiencing houselessness can register to vote in MA (and in all 50 states)**
- **They can list a shelter address where they could receive mail, and denote a street corner or park as their residence in lieu of a traditional home address**

Voter Registration: Incarceration

- **Persons who are eligible to vote and are not incarcerated by reason of a felony can and should register to vote**
- **The Massachusetts mail-in voter registration form should be provided to any person who is registering to vote from a correctional facility or jail**
- **The VOTES Act has created more meaningful access for voters who are currently incarcerated that are slated to begin in early 2023.**

Types of Elections

- **Primary Election**

An election to choose the candidates that will represent their political party in the general election and/or to vote on primary systems ballot measures.

- **General Election**

A regular election for statewide or national offices and/or general systems ballot measures.

- **Annual Town Election**

Almost every town in Massachusetts holds an annual town election in odd number years, which must be held on a date set by the town between **February 1st** and **June 30th**.

Dates to Remember!

August 27, 2022

Wednesday

Registration deadline for
The Massachusetts Primary Election

August 27 – September 2, 2022

Early voting days
The Massachusetts Primary Election

September 6, 2022

Tuesday 7am-8pm
The Massachusetts Primary Election

October 22 – November 4, 2022

Early voting days
The Massachusetts General Election

October 29, 2022

Wednesday
Registration deadline for
The Massachusetts General Election

November 8, 2022

Tuesday 7am-8pm
The Massachusetts General Election

How do I find out where to vote?

Wheredoivotema.com

Find my election information

To find your election information:

- Enter your residential address.
- This address must be in a city or town in Massachusetts.
- If you live in a village, view list of [village names \(opens in new window or tab\)](#) to find the city or town name for your village.
- Required fields are marked with an asterisk (*).

* Required: Enter your street address in 3 separate boxes

1. Your street number (numbers only):

2. Your street name:

3. Select street suffix:

* Required: Provide a city or town, or your zip code

Your city or town:

Or your zip code (numbers only):

Clear fields

Show my results

Know Your Rights: At the Polls

As a voter with a disability, you have the right to

- **vote privately and independently**
- **have an accessible polling place with voting machines for voters with disabilities**

You may either

- **seek assistance from workers at the polling place who have been trained to use the accessible voting machines, or**
- **bring someone to help you vote**

You may request your local election officials to tell you about any voting aids, voting assistance, and vote by mail procedures that are available.

Getting Help with Voting

If you need help voting because of a disability, you have the right to get help from almost any person you choose:

- a family member
- a friend
- a supporter
- a poll worker

Anyone helping you vote must respect your choices and cannot assume he or she knows who you want to vote for.

The two kinds of people who *cannot* help you vote are:

- your boss or someone working for your boss
- if you belong to a labor union, an officer or agent of that labor union

Your Rights When Someone Is Helping You Vote

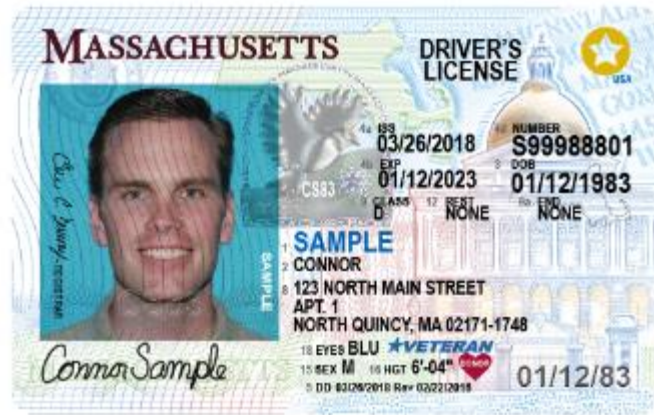
- **The helper must respect your privacy at all times.**
- **If you have a hard time reading the ballot, you may**
 - **ask for a voting machine that reads aloud the choices on the ballot**
 - **ask a helper to read aloud all the names on the ballot.**
- **If you have a hard time marking the ballot by yourself, you can tell the helper which person you want to vote for.**

What You Can Expect from Officials When You Vote

- Election officials must help you vote if you ask for their help.
 - They must ensure that you can use all of their voting booths, ballots or other voting forms, voting machines, and any other voting equipment.
- Service providers and election officials must make reasonable changes to their policies in order to help you vote.
- The National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) says that all disability service agencies are voter registration agencies.
 - They must give you voter registration forms, if you ask for them.
 - They must help you fill them out.
 - They must send the form to the appropriate agency for processing.

When is identification required?

If you are voting for the first time or have been an inactive voter, you may be asked to show identification.



Acceptable identification must include your name and the address at which you are registered to vote. Examples of acceptable identification include: a driver's license, state-issued ID card, recent utility bill, rent receipt, lease, a copy of a voter registration affidavit, or any other printed identification which contains the voter's name and address.

Accessible Polling Places

- Accessible voting provides the same opportunity for access and participation to persons with disabilities as for other voters.
- All polling places in Massachusetts must provide access on a permanent or temporary basis on Election Day.
- Voting assistance and voting by mail offer options that persons with disabilities *may* use to vote but are not considered substitutes for actual accessibility to the voting location.

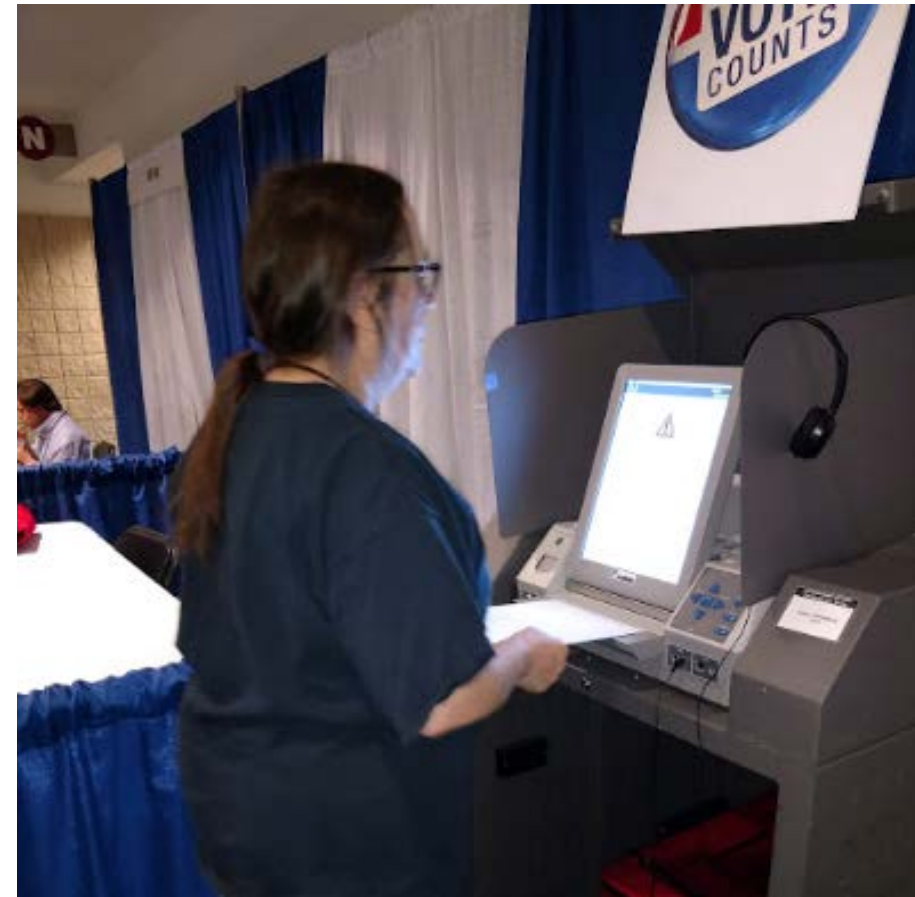


Accessible Voting Equipment

Polling places must be equipped for voters with disabilities, allowing them to have the same opportunity to vote privately and independently. Every precinct must have at least one accessible voting machine available.

The AutoMARK:

- is a marking device that uses audio cue capacity for visually impaired voters
- has a feature that will greatly magnify the ballot or display the ballot high-contrast for voters that have limited visual impairment
- can produce an oral report to the voter of the choices selected prior to the voter printing the ballot.



Vote By Mail: Applying for your Ballot

- Vote by Mail applications will be mailed in July and September to every voter who hasn't already requested a mail-in ballot for the fall elections. These applications will be pre-addressed to your local election office and postage pre-paid.
- Vote by Mail applications can also be downloaded or printed from SOS website.
- You can write a signed letter to your local elections office to apply for your ballot.
- Applications need to be submitted by mail, email, or fax.

Vote by Mail Application: Step by Step

2022 Vote by Mail Application



William Francis Galvin
Secretary of the Commonwealth

1

Voter Information

Name: _____

Address of Voter Registration: _____

Date of Birth: _____ Phone Number (optional): _____

E-mail Address (optional): _____

2

Ballot Information

Elections:

- All 2022 Elections*
- Sept. 6th State Primary*
- Nov. 8th State Election Only

* Primary Ballot

- Democratic
- Republican

Ballot Mailing Address _____

3

Assistance

Voter required assistance in completing application due to physical disability.

Assisting person's name: _____

Assisting person's address: _____

This application is being made by a family member

Relationship to Voter: _____



Signed (under penalty of perjury): _____ Date: _____

Vote By Mail: Primary Elections in MA

- **Applying for a primary ballot: if applying, and you aren't registered for a party, you must indicate which party's ballot you want to receive.**
- **If you're unenrolled ('Independent') OR enrolled in political designations, you are allowed the vote in the primary of your choice (Republican or Democrat). Your ballot choice will not affect your party registration.**
- **For the September 6, 2022 State Primaries, your ballot must reach your local election office by 8 p.m. on Election Day in order to be counted. Ballots that arrive after that time – even if they are postmarked on or before Election Day – will not be counted.**

Vote By Mail: General Elections in MA

- **Vote by mail applications/requests must be received at least 5 business days before Election Day**
- **For the November 8, 2022, State Election, ballots returned in person or by drop box must be delivered by 8 p.m. on Election Day. Ballots returned by mail from inside the United States must reach your local election office by 5 p.m. on November 11, 2022, in order to be counted. Mailed ballots received after 8 p.m. on Election Day can only be counted if they are postmarked by Election Day.**

Vote By Mail: Application Deadlines

- **Apply as early as possible! Give yourself enough time to receive your ballot AND send it back, if you can. Best practice is 2-3 weeks before Election Day.**
- **Any mail-in ballot must be requested in writing at least 5 business days before Election Day.**
- **Your application can only be accepted if it has reached your local election office by the deadline.**

Election	Application Deadline
September 6, 2022 State Primaries	5 p.m., Monday, August 29, 2022
November 8, 2022 State Election	5 p.m., Tuesday, November 1, 2022

Vote By Mail: Returning your Ballot

- Mail it back using the envelope provided
- Hand-deliver your ballot to [your local election office](#)
- Drop your ballot off at an [early voting location](#) during early voting hours
- Using a [ballot drop box](#) provided by your city or town.
- Ballots must reach your local elections office by the close of polls on Election Day in order to be counted.
- Use the SOS's [Track my Ballot tool](#) to check the status of your ballot.

Absentee Ballots

- **To qualify for an absentee ballot, you must:**
 - **Be away from your city/town on Election Day; or**
 - **Have a disability that keeps you from voting at your polling place; or**
 - **Have a religious belief that prevents you from voting at your polling place on Election Day**
- **You should apply for an absentee ballot if:**
 - **You are a U.S. citizen residing overseas; or**
 - **You are on active military duty; or**
 - **You are currently incarcerated for a reason other than a felony conviction; or**
 - **You are requesting an emergency absentee ballot due to hospitalization.**

Emergency Absentee Ballots

- If you have been admitted to a healthcare facility within 1 week of the election, you may use the absentee ballot application to designate someone of your choice to deliver a ballot to you. The person you designate to deliver your ballot will need to bring the signed application to your local election office, pick up your absentee ballot, bring it to you, and return it for you by the close of polls on Election Day. Emergency ballots may be requested up until the close of polls.
- [You can find the absentee ballot application here](#) The only difference between this application and the vote by mail application is section 3: Special Circumstances.

3
Special Circumstances
(If applicable)


- This application is being made by a family member of the voter.
Relationship to voter: _____
 - Voter is a member of military on active duty or dependent family member of active duty personnel.
 - Voter is a Massachusetts citizen residing overseas.
 - Voter is incarcerated, but not for a felony conviction.
 - Voter has been admitted to a healthcare facility within 7 days of the election and has designated the following person to hand-deliver the ballot:

 - Voter required assistance in completing application due to physical disability.
Assisting person's name: _____
Assisting person's address: _____
-

Sample Absentee Ballot

Sample Ballot

**ANNUAL TOWN ELECTION
ABSENTEE BALLOT
NORTHBOROUGH,
MASSACHUSETTS
May 8, 2018**



Andrew T. David
TOWN CLERK

To vote for a candidate, fill in the oval to the right of the candidate's name. To vote for a person not on the ballot, write that person's name and residence in the blank space provided and fill in the oval.

<p>MODERATOR 1 YEAR</p> <p>Frederick A. George Jr. 36 Wesson Terrace <input type="radio"/></p> <p><small>WRIE IN SPACE ONLY</small></p>	<p>N/S REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE (Northborough Candidates) 3 YEARS</p> <p>Helynne B. Winter 22 Grinnell Lane <input type="radio"/></p> <p>Kathleen M. Howland 20 School Street <input type="radio"/></p> <p><small>WRIE IN SPACE ONLY</small></p>
<p>BOARD OF SELECTMEN 3 YEARS</p> <p>William J. Pantazis 10 Mulberry Lane <input type="radio"/></p> <p>Julianne S. Hirsh 19 Smith Road <input type="radio"/></p> <p>Timothy M. Kaelin 42 Davis Street <input type="radio"/></p> <p><small>WRIE IN SPACE ONLY</small></p>	<p>N/S REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE (Southborough Candidates) 3 YEARS</p> <p>Kathleen A. Harragan 28 Darlene Drive <input type="radio"/></p> <p>Cathy A. Kea 1 Ashley Road <input type="radio"/></p> <p><small>WRIE IN SPACE ONLY</small></p>
<p>PLANNING BOARD 3 YEARS</p> <p>Leslie RM Harrison 28 Moore Lane <input type="radio"/></p> <p>Kerri A. Martinek 16 Hemlock Drive <input type="radio"/></p> <p>Anthony W. Ziton 17 Franklin Circle <input type="radio"/></p> <p><small>WRIE IN SPACE ONLY</small></p>	<p>SCHOOL COMMITTEE 3 YEARS</p> <p>Lauren C. Bailey 11 Elmwood Drive <input type="radio"/></p> <p>Hallie Jean Barak 311 Davis Street <input type="radio"/></p> <p>Kelly L. Guenette 69 Northgate Road <input type="radio"/></p> <p><small>WRIE IN SPACE ONLY</small></p>

Vote By Mail: Accessible Electronic Remote Vote by Mail

- **Accessible Electronic Remote Vote by Mail, essentially an electronic ballot, is an accommodation for voters who are blind or have low vision, mobility/dexterity disabilities, or other disabilities that make it difficult or impossible to effectively complete and cast a standard print ballot. This allows for qualifying voters to mark their ballots independently and privately, then submit their ballot via a secure electronic delivery system.**
- **The Accessible Electronic Remote Voting System is compatible with screen readers.**
- **For many, having this option has been the first time in their voting history that they have been able to vote independently and privately**

Accessible Electronic Remote Vote by Mail: How to Apply

- **This is still a work in progress for Massachusetts**
- **We urge you to reach out to your elected officials and ask them to collaborate with voters who qualify for Accessible Electronic Remote Vote by Mail on a process to apply that is the most streamlined for the disability community**
- **Please return for future REV UP Mass! events & trainings for updates on this process**
- **Stay tuned for step by step instruction and resources from REV UP! Mass on how to apply for accessible electronic remote vote by mail**

Voter Education: Mis- and disinformation

- **Misinformation refers to false rumors and misconceptions about elections**
- **Disinformation could be targeted messages spread to purposely mislead voters.**
- **There are lots of bad actors that are making up and then spreading convincing disinformation and misinformation.**
- **The internet is used to spread disinformation and misinformation at a very fast speed to and at a massive scale.**
- **Mis- and disinformation are widespread in elections, especially during federal election cycles.**
- **What mis or disinformation are the actors spreading:**
 - **Incorrect polling sites, incorrect voting dates, incorrect information about who can and cannot vote**
 - **Messages that make you doubt that your vote will count**
 - **Conspiracy theories about votes, the ballots, and destruction of ballots**
- **These bad actions tend to hurt our communities.**
 - **Always check what you read or what someone tells you**

Safety at the Polls

- **The VOTES Act now gives you the ability to vote safely and independently from your home.**
- **If you are worried about crowds, please check out the early voting days and polling locations in your area.**
- **If anyone is at the polls trying to intimidate you, please advise a voting official at the polling site.**
- **Voter Intimidation is illegal in Massachusetts. You can call the Civil Rights Division of the MA Attorney General's office to file a complaint.**
- **You can also contact the Election Protection Hotline at 866-OUR-VOTE (866-687-8683) to get voting help from a trained election protection volunteer.**

Accessibility complaints?

- **The Elections Division of the Secretary of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts is committed to making voting as accessible for all voters.**
- **Please let the Elections Division know how it can improve accessibility by calling 800-462-VOTE (8683) (toll free) or 617-727-2828.**
- **You may also e-mail elections@sec.state.ma.us.**

Resources

- *Assisting Voters with Disabilities: A Guide for Family, Friends, and Providers.* Disability Rights Oregon. (n.d.). Retrieved March 3, 2022, from <https://www.droregon.org/voting-rights>
- *Elections Division.* Sec.state.ma.us. (n.d.). Retrieved March 3, 2022, from <https://www.sec.state.ma.us/ele/eleidx.htm>
- Sallo, M. (2018). Your vote counts, so go out and vote! [pp slides]. Disability Law Center, Boston, MA.
- “AutoMARK Machine.” *REV UP! Register, Educate, Vote: Increasing the Disability Vote in Massachusetts.* <http://revupma.org/wp/vote/automark-machine/>. Accessed 12 July 2018.
- “Elections and Voting.” *William Francis Galvin, Secretary of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.* <https://www.sec.state.ma.us/ele/eleidx.htm>. Accessed 12 July 2018.

Resources

- “Getting Help with Voting.” *Vote. It’s Your Right: A Know-Your-Rights Guide for Voters with Mental Disabilities and Advocates*. http://www.bazelon.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/2016_Voter-Guide-Plain-Language.pdf. Accessed 14 July 2018.
- Kennedy, Joseph, III. 12 June 2018.
- O’Malley, Debra. “A Get Out the Vote Project.” Received by Julie Heffernan, 19 June 2018.
- “#TheArcVotes.” *The Arc of Massachusetts*. <http://arcmass.org/voting>. Accessed 12 July 2018.