



# **New York City Voter Registration Training Guide**



# Contents

<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>About the League of Women Voters .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Why Voter Registration Drives? .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>How to Plan and Conduct a Voter Registration Drive .....</b>	<b>7</b>
To organize the drive on your own, or in conjunction with another organization .....	7
To participate in a LWVNYC organized drive .....	8
<b>Borough Board of Elections Offices .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Reaching Out to Prospective Registrants .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>NYC Voter Registration Eligibility .....</b>	<b>13</b>
Who is eligible to register and vote in New York City? .....	13
The 25-day requirement for voter registration .....	13
Changing party enrollment .....	13
Voter registration online for DMV account holders .....	14
Registration issues for special populations .....	14
<b>The New York State Voter Registration Form .....</b>	<b>16</b>
Questions in detail: 1-7 .....	16
Questions in detail: 8-13 .....	17
Questions in detail: 14-15 and Affidavit .....	18
<b>Next Steps .....</b>	<b>20</b>
Checking voter registration status .....	21
No registration record at poll site – Affidavit ballots .....	21
Looking up a poll site location .....	21
Sample ballots online .....	21
<b>Absentee voting .....</b>	<b>22</b>
In-person absentee voting .....	22
By-mail absentee voting .....	22
<b>Using the Paper Ballot Optical Scanning Voting System and the Ballot Marking Device (BMD) in New York City .....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Questions and Answers Related to Voting .....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Political Vocabulary .....</b>	<b>25</b>

# Introduction

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**Thank you for volunteering  
to register New York City  
residents to vote.**

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You have chosen to participate in an important and rewarding outreach that will help others learn how to participate in democracy and become more informed citizens. The League of Women Voters of the City of New York (LWVNYC) has been encouraging informed and active participation in government for over one hundred years.

The purpose of this guide is to act as a reference as you either volunteer at a voter registration drive organized by the LWVNYC, or organize and conduct your own voter registration drives in New York City. The information covers many aspects of this process, from how a registration form needs to be filled out to general information about the New York City election process.

While this manual tries to cover all the information you should need to organize or volunteer for a voter registration drive, and answer questions about registration and voting requirements, there are situations that might not be covered. If that occurs, please contact the LWVNYC at (212) 725-3541 so we can find an answer to the question.

Registration is not the end of the process. It is only the beginning. Democracy and majority rule mean very little if fewer than half of those eligible to vote perform their civic duty and vote.

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**Democracy is not  
a spectator sport.**



# About the League of Women Voters

**The League of Women Voters of the City of New York (LWVNYC) is a non-partisan membership organization whose purpose is to promote informed and active citizen participation in government.** We are committed to empowering citizens with the meaningful information needed to make sound decisions for our democracy.

Founded in 1919, the LWVNYC was an outgrowth of the Women's Suffrage movement. While the League's legislative priorities change to reflect the needs of society, our organization remains true to its basic purpose: to make democracy work for all of its citizens. Membership is open to all, regardless of gender, who support its causes. The League is supported by membership dues and contributions from public-spirited individuals, businesses, and corporations.

The League's enduring vitality comes from its unique decentralized structure, working at the national, state and local levels. Funding for the League comes from membership dues, admission fees at events, sales of publications, contributions, and grants.

In New York City, the League provides:

**Telephone information services:** answering questions about city, state and national government from 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM Monday – Friday.

**Educational publications:** *What Makes New York City Run?*, a citizen's guide to New York City government, and *They Represent You*, an annually updated directory of city, state and federal legislators who represent New York residents.

**Candidate debate moderators who inform and stimulate:** The League and WABC, for example, were selected by the Campaign Finance Board to conduct the official televised candidate debates for the Mayoral, Comptroller and Public Advocate races during some municipal elections.

**Speakers** on the political process and subjects the League has studied.

**Helpful tools** to contact your elected officials include the website [mygovnyc.org](http://mygovnyc.org) in partnership with the CUNY Graduate Center.

**Impact on issues:** highlighting key issues that the LWVNYC has studied.



LWVNYC voter registration volunteers at the New York City Women's March, January 19, 2019.

# Why Voter Registration Drives?

A voter registration drive makes it easy for individuals to register to vote and/or get answers to their questions about eligibility, upcoming elections and resources.

Usually registering to vote requires some effort, contacting the Board of Elections (BOE) to get a registration form, filling out the form, and then mailing it to the BOE.

While citizens can also register when they apply for or renew their driver's license, many New Yorkers don't drive.

By bringing the registration process to places where potential voters already frequent, we provide a service and promote democracy.

# How to Plan and Conduct a Voter Registration Drive

If you are organizing the drive on your own,  
or in conjunction with another organization:

1 Select a **Voter Registration Drive Coordinator**.

2 Select a **date and time**.

3 **Choose a location** to hold the drive and get written permission to use the site, if applicable.

You will not need written permission to conduct a drive in a public space, such as in a park or on the sidewalk. However, it is good practice to coordinate with any group or business the drive may effect.

If you will be by a subway station, be sure not to block flow of traffic.

Certain locations, such as farmer's markets, require advance permitting.

4 **Publicize the event** in organizational bulletins, community newspapers and flyers to the populations you want to register. You can also announce the voter registration event through your personal or organizational website, Facebook, Twitter, or other social media.

5 **Get registration forms** from the citywide Board of Elections office (relevant addresses and phone numbers at the end of this section.)

The Board of Elections will mail up to 250 registration forms to individuals.

Registration forms are available in English, Spanish, Chinese, Korean and Bengali.

6 **Train your volunteers** on registration requirements before the event begins.

7 Have **black or blue pens** available (black or blue ink is required on the voter registration form.)

8 Make your registration table **as attractive as possible**. For example, you could provide candy or other giveaway items based on your budget. Be sure to display signs and posters in the registration area.

9 Have information available on **voters' rights**: how to use the Paper Ballot Optical Screening System, information on political parties, as well as literature on the importance of voting.

10 If registrants complete their forms and turn them in to you, **check to make sure the forms are completed correctly** before the registrants leave the table.

11 The coordinator, or another representative of the organization sponsoring the event, should **deliver the completed forms** to the appropriate borough office of the Board of Elections, or to the Board's central office in Manhattan at 32 Broadway, 7th Floor.

**We advise you to deliver the forms to the Board of Elections office as quickly as possible to ensure that the people you have registered can vote in the next election without incident.**

Don't hold onto the forms and turn them in close to the registration deadline. The Board is overwhelmed with forms close to the deadlines and that's when mistakes are made.

12 If a registrant wants to **take a form and mail it in**, that is fine.

Point out the required document list on the registration form upper right side.


Mailed-in registration forms of first-time voters require ID. If an ID number is not provided on the form, or is not provided in response to a letter of request from the Board, the voter will be asked to produce identification at the polling place the first time he or she votes.

- 1 Take the voter registration training workshop.
- 2 Fill out the voter registration volunteer form. Make sure it includes a valid email address, clearly printed.
- 3 You'll receive emails asking you to volunteer for events.  
If you want to volunteer for a specific event, please respond to the email with any information requested, such as what shift(s) you can volunteer for, or if you can pick up or return registration materials to the LWN NYC office.
- 4 If you are scheduled for an event, you will receive a confirmation email. Whenever possible, newly trained volunteers will be paired with more experienced ones.
- 5 One LWN NYC volunteer will bring materials to the event. Unless you are assigned to this task, you just have to show up.
- 6 Set up the table at your assigned space with the materials provided by the League.

If you are conducting a drive without a table, be sure to have literature handy in a League backpack.

**8** Ask registrants or other voters if they want to be reminded to vote. If so, have them fill out the Voter Registration Reminder Form with either their email address or phone number.

**LWNYC** League of Women Voters  
of the City of New York



# Voter Registration Event Tracking Form

Please complete this form and submit it no later than one week after the voter registration event. Return this completed form to the LWNYC office, email it to [office@lwnyc.org](mailto:office@lwnyc.org), or enter the data link in your confirmation email. Thank you!

1. Event Information		2. Volunteer Information
Event Title	Event Date	Name of Volunteer Completing this Form
Borough	Host Organization	Email of Volunteer Completing this Form
Location/Address	Type of Location (ex.: high school, street fair, etc.)	LWW Volunteers' Names and Shifts
Language(s) Spoken	Event Contact Person	
<b>3. Event Totals</b>		
<b>Drive Data</b>	<b>Total Count</b>	<b>Tally</b>
Number of attendees at event (estimate)		This is a workspace to help you keep count (ex.: use slashmarks by hour or shift.) If you collect all completed applications, just enter the total count at left.
Number of voter registration forms completed at event		
Number of voter registration forms taken but not completed at event		
Number of absentee ballot applications completed or taken		
Number of LWNYC membership applications completed at event		
<b>4. Other Materials Used at Event</b>		<b>5. Event Notes</b>
Please mark which materials were the most helpful.		
<input type="radio"/> NYS Political Parties <input type="radio"/> Student Voting Guide <input type="radio"/> First Vote <input type="radio"/> 2019 Ballot Info <input type="radio"/> "I Registered" Stickers	What other materials would you have liked to have at your event?	

LWNYC - League of Women Voters

[illegible]



# **Borough Board of Elections Offices**

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## **Bronx**

1780 Grand Concourse  
Bronx, NY 10457  
(718) 299-9017

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## **Brooklyn**

345 Adams Street  
Brooklyn, NY 11201  
(718) 797-8800

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## **Manhattan**

200 Varick Street  
New York, NY 10014  
(212) 886-2100

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## **Queens**

118-35 Queens Boulevard  
Forest Hills, NY 11375  
(718) 730-6730

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## **Staten Island**

1 Edgewater Plaza  
Staten Island, NY 10305  
(718) 876-0079

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## **Citywide Board of Elections Information**

32 Broadway, 7th Floor  
New York, NY 10006  
(212) VOTE-NYC (868-3692); TTY: (212) 487-5496  
[vote.nyc.ny.us](http://vote.nyc.ny.us)

# Reaching Out to Prospective Registrants

A voter registration drive is not just to register new voters, it also provides an opportunity to have voters change their address or party affiliation. Voters can also learn about dates for an upcoming election, the offices and candidates, and any questions on the ballot or how to find their polling location.

Sitting behind the table is generally not enough to get people to stop. If there are several volunteers working the same drive and shift, they should alternate sitting at the table and reaching out to those passing by.

As people pass by, you can ask:

**"When did you last update your voter registration?"**

**"Are you registered to vote at your current address?"**

**"Have you checked to make sure your polling place hasn't changed?"**

## When they say...

**"I don't have time right now."**

## You can say...

"No problem! I don't want to take away from your day, so I'm happy to walk with you and even fill out the form as you go."

*If they still refuse and it's clear they won't be convinced to do it now:*

"Here's a form to take with you. When you're done, just drop it in the mail — and you don't even need a stamp!"

"These five minutes can make a big difference! Your vote does matter, and the deadline is \_\_\_\_."

**"I don't know if I'm eligible." or  
"I can't vote."**

"Here's the list of eligibility requirements.  
Do any of these apply to you?"

**"I don't know if I'm already registered."**

"Can I help you look that up?"  
Use [voterlookup.elections.state.ny.us](https://voterlookup.elections.state.ny.us)

**"I don't vote because my vote doesn't count."**

"I'm so sorry you feel that way — how frustrating! It can often feel that way, but your vote can make a HUGE difference, especially in local elections. There've been many times recently when an election was determined by a few hundred votes."

"If your vote doesn't matter, why do you think so many people in power (who DO vote) are trying to make it harder for you to vote?"

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**When they say...****You can say...**

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**"They're all crooks."**

"It's easy to get the idea that they're all crooks. But your vote can help change that. You have the power to take a situation you hate and make it much better. Get to know your representatives! They work for you, after all. But they're not mind-readers, and they WANT to hear from you."

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**"I don't pay any attention to politics."**

**"Government has nothing to do with me."**

**"I don't vote (I'm not interested)." or**

**"I don't care about politics."**

*If someone says they're not interested or "don't vote", take a step back for a moment and first clarify that you're on the same page: "Can you help me understand what voting means to you?" Ensure that they understand what it means to vote and how they are involved.*

*If someone says government doesn't do anything for them, you can point out things immediately around you: accessible sidewalks, routine trash collection, police patrols, plowed and paved streets, public transit, sewers, schools, healthcare, storm protection, etc.*

"The decisions politicians make affect you every day." *Ask them about their values and interests. "What is important to you in your life?" Try to have them focus on a pressing/major issue in the area. "You can have some control over that!"*

"People are going to be elected to represent you whether you vote or not. If you don't vote, you don't have a stake in the decisions already being made for you. You're letting other people decide what is best for you."

"As a taxpayer, you pay the salaries for elected officials."

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**"I don't want to be called for jury duty."**

"New York State voter registration listings are only one of many databases the state uses to select potential jurors, including: all IDs issued by the DMV, state income tax filers, recipients of unemployment insurance, family assistance and public benefits."

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**"I don't know how or where to register."**

"You can register right here, right now, and we'll help you do it. It takes a minute or two, and we'll even turn in your completed form to the Board of Elections for you!"

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**"I don't have transportation to my polling place."**

"Not a problem: you have a number of options. You can contact the campaign of any candidate you plan on voting for, and they can arrange a ride for you on election day. Or, you can go with a friend (or a group of friends, neighbors, family, coworkers) that can help you with transportation and make sure all of your votes count!"

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Other responses will vary from "I'm not a citizen", or "I'm visiting from \_\_\_\_ (other country)" or "I don't live in New York City/State". These responses are common in high traffic tourist areas.

**The overall idea is to make the person feel listened to before trying to change their mind. Acknowledge their point of view. Then, gently suggest an alternative way to look at the situation.**

**One question to NEVER ask is “Are you a citizen?” Even documented immigrants can find this question uncomfortable.**

If a person is registered to vote, ask if they know the location of their polling place, or if they want information about the upcoming election (if information is available).

If there are questions on the ballot on which the League has taken a position, ask them if they are aware of the questions and, if possible, give them a brochure with the information.

### **Make sure you record all the relevant information on the Voter Registration Event Tracking Form:**

Information about handouts distributed helps in planning which and how many to include in registration kits.

It is also important that the information about the number of individuals registered and the number of individuals who took a registration form be recorded, so that the LWVNYC can evaluate the effectiveness of various drives and locations.

These numbers also help the League apply for grants. We cannot fund this work without these statistics.

### **Common Questions**

### **Recommended Responses**

**“What organization are you working for?” or  
“What does your organization do?”**

“We’ve been trained about voter registration through the non-partisan League of Women Voters.”

**“Are you here as a representative for  
a candidate or party?”**

“No. We do not represent any election campaign or party.”

**“How much are you being paid?”**

“Nothing. We are volunteers with the League of Women Voters, one of the oldest voting rights groups in the country. We are citizens and residents of New York just like you.”

**“Which candidate or party should I vote for?”**

“We’re not endorsing candidates. We just want people to vote their voice.”

**“Why should I listen to you?  
You don’t live here/have this representative.”**

“I am your neighbor / We’re all New Yorkers. What happens in your neighborhood affects my neighborhood.”

“Too often, people are upset with their representatives. They don’t see people working for them and their interests. People should be empowered to be the ones to make these choices for themselves.”

“You can vote by voting, or vote by not voting. Don’t let someone else’s choices speak for you. I’m not asking you to listen to me, but to register to vote so you can have a say in your future.”

# NYC Voter Registration Eligibility

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## Who is eligible to register and vote in New York City?

.....  
A **citizen of the United States** (born in the U.S. or naturalized).  
Persons born in Puerto Rico, Guam, and the U.S. Virgin Islands  
are U.S. citizens.

.....  
A **resident of New York City** for at least 30 days before the  
election.

.....  
A person who is **at least 18 years of age** by Election Day. If  
a person will turn 18 by the end of the year, that person may  
register but may only vote in an election on or after their 18th  
birthday. As of January 2020 persons 16 and 17 can pre-regis-  
ter to vote, but cannot vote in an election until they turn 18.

.....  
A person who is not serving a jail sentence for a **felony con-  
viction**.

.....  
A person who is not adjudged by a court to be **mentally in-  
competent** to vote.

.....  
A person who is not **claiming the right to vote  
elsewhere** (outside New York City).

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## Once registered, you remain on the rolls until you:

.....  
Move.

.....  
Change your name.

.....  
Have not voted for 5 years and live at the same address, in  
which case your name may be on the inactive list, but not on  
the registration list at the polls. In this case, ask to vote on an  
affidavit ballot (described in a few other places in this Guide,  
including the Political Vocabulary).

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## Can a convicted felon register?

A person with a criminal record can register and vote in New  
York State provided they are not still serving a prison sentence  
for a felony. Once a felon completes their sentence, they must  
re-register to vote.

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## The 25-Day Requirement for Voter Registration

In New York State, voter registration forms must be received  
by the Board of Elections 25 days before the election in which  
the applicant wishes to vote.

The state legislature passed a voting reform package in Janu-  
ary 2019 that includes same day voter registration, but it must  
be passed again in another legislative session. The earliest it  
could become law is 2021.

Exceptions to the 25-day requirement:

.....  
Any qualified person who has been honorably discharged  
from the military after the 25th day before a general election,  
or who has become a naturalized citizen after the 25th day  
before the general election, may personally register at the  
BOE in the applicant's county of residence and vote in the  
general election held at least 10 days after such registration.

.....  
A change of registration, i.e. new address/name, must be  
received by the BOE 25 days before the election.

.....  
Only new voters, or voters who are registering in New York  
from out of state, can register and enroll in a political party 25  
days before the primary and vote in the primary of the party in  
which they are enrolled.

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## Changing party enrollment

A registration form submitted to change enrollment from one  
party to another, or from "blank" to a party designation, must  
be received by the BOE 25 days before the **preceding** general  
election in order for the voter to participate in their new par-  
ty's **next** primary.

So, if someone wanted to change their party for the 2020  
general election, they would have to do so 25 days before the  
2019 general election.

**In a general election, a voter may vote  
for any candidate regardless of party in  
which the voter is enrolled.**

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### **Voter registration online for DMV account holders**

If an individual has a driver's license, a non-driver's ID card or a learner's permit issued by the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV), he or she may register to vote or update registration on the MyDMV website: [dmv.ny.gov/mydmv](https://dmv.ny.gov/mydmv)

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Upon signing in to the MyDMV application, select "Electronic Voter Registration Application" to complete a voter registration form online.

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There will be four questions that are on the BOE registration form, including the affirmation of an affidavit stating that the individual is eligible to register and that all of the information provided is truthful.

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The registrant will also be asked to agree to the NYS DMV attestation which authorizes the DMV to send the BOE the digital signature they have on file from the individual's application for a driver's license, a non-driver's ID card or a learner's permit. The BOE has agreed to accept that attestation as the legal equivalent of a handwritten signature.

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The DMV does not approve or deny voter registration applications; it simply forwards the online applications to the county BOE for processing.

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### **Registration issues for special populations**

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#### **Homeless individuals**

Homeless individuals may register using the location where they stay at night, which can be the closest building address to a street corner, a shelter, a train station or any other location. This address is used by the BOE to assign the voter to appropriate election districts.

A mailing address must also be provided on the voter registration form and can be that of a local advocacy organization, shelter, outreach center, or anywhere else where someone is willing to accept mail on the voter's behalf. This mailing address does not have to be a residential address.

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#### **College students**

Every voter needs to have information about the issues and the candidates. Registering and voting at college can give the student the opportunity to be involved with, and informed about, the local issues in their college town or city. Becoming involved in the issues and learning about local politics are some of the ways in which students begin to build a relationship with other residents of the community.

College students can register to vote at either their current/college address or at their prior/home address. In deciding whether to register to vote at home or at school, a student should make their decision based upon which community they feel more connected to and where they think their vote will count the most. When considering whether or not to use a college address, the student should also keep in mind that s/he may move from dorm to dorm, or from a dorm to a location outside of the college. Each change of address must be sent to the local Board of Elections.

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### Victims of domestic violence

NYS Election Law (5-508) allows victims of domestic violence, who obtain a court order from NY Supreme Court in the county where they are registered, to have their voter registration record kept separate and apart from other registration records and not to be made available for copying by the public or any other person, except election officials acting within the course and scope of their official duties.

Under a separate section of the law (11-306), they can also be excused from going to their polling place to vote and get a special ballot. With a written statement that they are a victim of domestic violence and cannot live at their current address due to the threat, they can go to the BOE that covers their former address when absentee ballots are being given out and vote absentee using their former address even though they no longer live there.

For further information, victims of domestic violence should contact their local Board of Elections for their confidential registration and special ballot procedures.

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### Individuals with mental health disabilities

Individuals with mental health issues have a right to vote. According to NYS Election Law, if a person is otherwise eligible to vote, they are only prevented from voting if they have been adjudged incompetent or incapacitated to vote by order of a court. No person is prohibited from voting simply because he or she has been subjected to civil commitment.

Benefits and services will not be affected by registering to vote. There is no relationship between registering to vote and one's eligibility for benefits and services.

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### Individuals with a criminal record

Individuals who have been convicted of a felony cannot register to vote if they are currently incarcerated.

Individuals who have been convicted of a felony **may** register and vote:

.....  
If they were sentenced to probation

.....  
If they were not sentenced to incarceration, or if their prison sentence was suspended

.....  
If they have completed their prison sentence

.....  
If they have received a pardon

.....  
If they have had their voting rights restored while on parole supervision

Individuals who have been convicted of a misdemeanor may register and vote.

There is no need to provide any documentation about criminal history in order to register.

Following are some frequently asked questions related to voting with a criminal record:

.....  
**Q: Can convicts vote from jail?**

Persons in jail may vote from jail as long as they are registered and not serving time on a felony conviction. If they are awaiting trial or disposition of a case, or if they are serving time on a misdemeanor, they may vote from jail as long as they are already registered.

.....  
**Q: How do persons in jail vote?**

They must request an absentee ballot from the BOE. To obtain an absentee ballot, they must first submit an absentee ballot application. In New York City, an application should be available at the detention facility, online at [vote.nyc.ny.us](https://vote.nyc.ny.us), or by calling (866) VOTE-NYC.

.....  
**Q: What address should be put on the voter registration form if a person is in jail?**

The person's permanent home address on the registration form, not the address of the facility where incarcerated.

# The New York State Voter Registration Form

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## This form can be used to:

Register to vote in New York City or New York State

Change a voter's name or home address on their voter registration record

Become a member of a political party

Change political party affiliation

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## Optional organ donor registration (on reverse)

Registrants who would like to donate organs or tissues to the NYS Department of Health's Donate Life Registry can fill out the form or register online. Gently encourage people to donate. New York has one of the lowest levels of available organs, meaning that people awaiting a transplant wait much longer than in other states. New York is one of the few states to have added this form to the Voter Registration application.

While it is important to encourage individuals to sign up to donate, it is also important to **make sure they don't think they've registered to vote by only filling out the organ donor form.**

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## Questions in detail: 1-7

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### Question 1

Are you a citizen of the U.S.?

Citizens of the United States are those born in the U.S. or naturalized.

Persons born in Puerto Rico, Guam, and the U.S. Virgin Islands are U.S. citizens.

Persons born abroad to married parents, of which at least one is a U.S. citizen who has lived in the U.S., are U.S. citizens.

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### Question 2

Will you be 18 years of age or older on or before election day?

The BOE currently registers persons who will be 18 by the end of the year. Only persons who are 18 on Election Day can vote. (Starting in January 2020, 16- and 17-year-olds will be allowed to pre-register.)

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### Question 3

Last name / First name / Suffix / Middle initial

"Suffix" refers to terms added after a last name, such as "Sr.", "Jr." or "III". Do not include other terms for professions or advanced degrees (e.g. "M.D.", "Esq.", "Ph.D.").

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### Question 4

Birth date

Date of birth must be provided for the registration to be processed.

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### Questions 5, 6, 7 (optional)

Gender / Phone / Email

Encourage the voter to provide either their phone number or email, so the BOE has a way to contact the voter if there is any uncertainty about the registration.



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**Questions in detail: 8-13**

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**Question 8**

The address where you live

This must be an official address, not a post office box.

College students can register at their NY address, including dorm rooms, or they can keep their registration in their home state (see the previous section "Registration Issues for Special Populations").

Homeless individuals can list an intersection as their address (see the previous section "Registration Issues for Special Populations").

**Question 9**

The address where you receive mail

Skip this section if the above address is where the voter receives mail.

This must be an address where the BOE can send a verification letter.

This can be a "care of" address for homeless individuals.

**Questions 10 and 11**

Voting history

If the answer to question 10 (if a person has already voted) is YES, they should try to enter a year in question 11.

If they can't remember the exact year, they can enter an approximate year.

These questions are not required, but they help the BOE staff locate a person's prior registration.

**Question 12**

Voting information that has changed

This question only has to be answered if someone is already registered to vote in New York State and needs to change the name or address of their registration.

**Question 13**

Identification

Registrants only need to provide the numbers from one form of identification.

Young people registering for the first time may not know their social security number, and not have a driver's license or non-driver identification card. You can suggest they call a parent who might know the number.

A person can register without providing ID information. If they do so, the BOE will send them a letter to their mailing address asking for a copy of ID (which could just be a phone bill.) If their ID is not verified before Election Day, new registrants will be asked to provide ID the first time — and only the first time — they vote.

If you have a person with a social security number or driver's license who does not recall the numbers, and does not have the appropriate documents with them to consult, they should take the form with them to complete and mail in.

**Question 14**

Political party

**REMINDER: Changing Political Parties**

Political parties can only be changed 25 days before the **preceding** general election. A person who wishes to change his or her party must do so approximately 10–13 months before it takes effect.

Voters can only select one party.

To vote in a primary election, a voter must be enrolled in one of the listed parties.

Registering for a party does not obligate the person to vote for that party's candidate in the general election.

The Independence Party is a political party. A person who wishes not to affiliate with any party should check "No Party".

Only enrolled members of a party qualified to vote for an office may sign designating petitions of the party.

The list of political parties may change after each gubernatorial race. To be eligible for ballot access, a party must have received at least 50,000 votes.

**Question 15**

Absentee ballots

Poll worker sign-up

Encourage people to consider becoming a poll worker. They can access an application at [nyc.electiondayworker.com](https://nyc.electiondayworker.com).

Currently, under New York State Law, absentee voting is only available to:

Registered voters who cannot make it to their poll site on Election Day because they will be outside the City of New York on Election Day (i.e. on primary, general, special elections.)

Persons awaiting sentencing, or incarcerated for a misdemeanor charge.

Persons who are ill, disabled, or in a hospital or long-term care facility.

The state legislature passed a voting reform package in January 2019 that includes no-excuse absentee voting, but it must be passed again in another legislative session. The earliest it could become law is 2021.

**Affidavit**

The registrant must sign and date the form to indicate that all information is true and that they meet all the requirements to register to vote. The signature provided will appear in the pollbook that needs to be signed when voting.

Note: While you can, with verbal permission, complete a form for someone else, only the voter can sign and date the form.



# New York State Voter Registration Form

## Register to vote

With this form, you register to vote in elections in New York State. You can also use this form to:

- change the name or address on your voter registration
- become a member of a political party
- change your party membership

## To register you must:

- be a US citizen;
- be 18 years old by the end of this year;
- not be in prison or on parole for a felony conviction (unless parole pardoned or restored rights of citizenship);
- not claim the right to vote elsewhere;
- not found to be incompetent by a court.

## Send or deliver this form

Fill out the form below and send it to your county's address on the back of this form, or take this form to the office of your County Board of Elections.

Mail or deliver this form at least **25 days before** the election you want to vote in. Your county will notify you that you are registered to vote.

## Questions?

Call your **County Board of Elections** listed on the back of this form or 1-800-FOR-VOTE (TDD/TTY Dial 711)

Find answers or tools on our website [www.elections.ny.gov](http://www.elections.ny.gov)

## Verifying your identity

We'll try to check your identity before Election Day, through the **DMV number (driver's license number or non-driver ID number)**, or the **last four digits of your social security number**, which you'll fill in below.

If you do not have a **DMV** or **social security number**, you may use a valid photo ID, a current utility bill, bank statement, paycheck, government check or some other government document that shows your name and address. You may include a copy of one of those types of ID with this form—be sure to tape the sides of the form closed.

If we are unable to verify your identity before Election Day, you will be asked for ID when you vote for the first time.

Información en español: si le interesa obtener este formulario en español, llame al 1-800-367-8683

中文資料: 若您有興趣索取中文資料表格, 請電: 1-800-367-8683

한국어: 한국어 양식을 원하시면 1-800-367-8683 으로 전화 하십시오.

बहि भाषी अर कमी भाषाभाषी लोकां खाती खाती 1-800-367-8683 वापर करीत काहीतू



It is a crime to procure a false registration or to furnish false information to the Board of Elections.

Please print in blue or black ink.



## Qualifications

1

Are you a citizen of the U.S.? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If you answer *No*, you cannot register to vote.

2

Will you be 18 years of age or older on or before election day? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If you answer *No*, you cannot register to vote unless you will be 18 by the end of the year.

For board use only

## Your name

3

Last name

Suffix

First name

Middle Initial

## More information

Items 5, 6 & 7 are optional

4

Birth date

5

Gender

6

Phone

7

Email

## The address where you live

8

Address (not P.O. box)

Apt. Number

Zip code

City/Town/Village

New York State County

## The address where you receive mail

Skip if same as above

9

Address or P.O. box

P.O. Box

Zip code

City/Town/Village

## Voting history

10

Have you voted before? ☐ Yes ☐ No

11

What year?

## Voting information that has changed

Skip if this has not changed or you have not voted before

12

Your name was

Your address was

Your previous state or New York State County was

## Identification

You must make 1 selection

For questions, please refer to *Verifying your identity* above.

13

☐ New York State DMV number

☐ Last four digits of your Social Security number

☐ I do not have a New York State driver's license or a Social Security number.

## Political party

You must make 1 selection

Political party enrollment is optional but that, in order to vote in a primary election of a political party, a voter must enroll in that political party, unless state party rules allow otherwise.

14

### I wish to enroll in a political party

- ☐ Democratic party
- ☐ Republican party
- ☐ Conservative party
- ☐ Working Families party
- ☐ Green party
- ☐ Libertarian party
- ☐ Independence party
- ☐ SAM party
- ☐ Other

**I do not want to enroll in any political party and wish to be an independent voter**

☐ No party

## Optional questions

15

☐ I need to apply for an Absentee ballot.

☐ I would like to be an Election Day worker.

16

## Affidavit: I swear or affirm that

- I am a citizen of the United States.
- I will have lived in the county, city or village for at least 30 days before the election.
- I meet all requirements to register to vote in New York State.
- This is my signature or mark in the box below.
- The above information is true, I understand that if it is not true, I can be convicted and fined up to \$5,000 and/or jailed for up to four years.

Sign

Date

Rev. 07/2019

Questions 1-6

Questions 8-9

Questions 10-13

Questions 14-15 and Affidavit

# Next Steps

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## Once a form is filled out:

- 1 Review the form to make sure all required information is provided and the application is legible.
- 2 Give the person an "I Registered to Vote" sticker and the LWVNYC "Go Vote" card.
- 3 Ask the person if they want to be reminded to vote. If they do, ask them to provide either their mobile phone number or email address on the LWVNYC Voting Reminder Form.
- 4 Remind the voter that they should receive an acknowledgement from the BOE in 4–6 weeks. If they don't receive it, they should contact the BOE at (212) VOTE-NYC. After allowing about 2 weeks to process, they can check their status online at [voterlookup.elections.ny.gov](https://voterlookup.elections.ny.gov).
- 5 Find their polling site at [nyc.pollsitelocator.com](https://nyc.pollsitelocator.com). The LWVNYC website also provides links on how to find their polling place, voters' guides, and information about elections.
- 6 Tell them that before each regularly scheduled primary and general election (not for special elections) the Campaign Finance Board NYC Votes will send a guide with general voting information, a list of candidates for each office and their profiles, as well as any ballot proposals.



LWVNYC voter registration on National Voter Registration Day, September 25, 2018.

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### Checking voter registration status

A voter should receive an Acknowledgement Notice from the Board of Elections that his or her registration was received 4–6 weeks after submission of their registration form (or sooner, if election day is getting close).

If a voter is not sure if he or she is registered, or to check status, the voter should contact the BOE by calling (866) VOTE-NYC, or by checking online at [voterlookup.elections.ny.gov](https://voterlookup.elections.ny.gov).

Click on the Voter Registration Information section at the bottom of the home page and then click on "Voter Registration Status". The voter will need to provide his or her date of birth to complete the status request.

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### Looking up a poll site location

The website [nyc.pollsitelocator.com](https://nyc.pollsitelocator.com) provides the most current location of a voter's poll site with a map, election district details and exact address.

In the weeks prior to each election, the site will also display a personalized sample ballot.

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### No registration record at poll site — Affidavit ballots

If a voter's name does not appear on the rolls at his or her polling place, and believes that he or she is registered and enrolled at the address given, he or she should request an affidavit ballot:

- 1 Ask the poll worker for an affidavit ballot.
- 2 Fill out the paper affidavit ballot and place it in the affidavit envelope.
- 3 Complete the information required on the outside of the envelope, including the information required on the voter registration form.
- 4 Seal the envelope and give it to the poll worker or poll site coordinator.
- 5 The envelope will be forwarded to the BOE, where the enclosed affidavit ballot will be counted if it is confirmed that the person is registered at the address provided.
- 6 If the BOE determines that the person is not registered at the address, the BOE will accept the information in the affidavit as a voter registration form, and will register the individual.

**Note:** If a voter, registered in New York State, moves WITHIN the state and fails to re-register his or her new address BEFORE the cut-off date, OR if a voter moves WITHIN New York City AFTER the deadline to register, he or she should go to the NEW polling place on Election Day and vote with an affidavit ballot. His or her name will not appear in the pollbook, hence the affidavit ballot.

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### Sample ballots online

Voters can find out who is on the ballot in their Election District before they go to the poll site on Election Day.

The sample ballots can be accessed online through the BOE website at [vote.nyc.ny.us](https://vote.nyc.ny.us), through the LWVNYC website at [lwnyc.org](https://lwnyc.org), or at [nyc.pollsitelocator.com](https://nyc.pollsitelocator.com).

The League of Women Voters has long advocated for online availability of sample ballots. As a result of a collaboration with the city's Department of Information, Technology and Communications (DoITT) and the BOE, sample ballots have at last been added to the BOE's online poll site locator.

# Absentee Voting

**Absentee voting is available for:**

Registered voters who cannot make it to their poll site on Election Day because they will be outside the City of New York on Election Day (i.e. on primary, general, special elections.)

Persons awaiting sentencing, or incarcerated for a misdemeanor charge.

Persons who are ill, disabled, or in a hospital or long-term care facility.

The state legislature passed a voting reform package in January 2019 that includes no-excuse absentee voting, but it must be passed again in another legislative session. The earliest it could become law is 2021.

There are two options available for New York City voters wishing to cast an absentee ballot: in-person absentee voting at BOE borough offices prior to Election Day, or voting by mail.

**In-person absentee voting**

In-person absentee voting begins as soon as the absentee ballots have been certified and are sent to the BOE borough office. Absentee voting in person ends the day before Election Day.

In-person absentee voting is conducted during the above period, at the BOE borough offices. The hours are 9:00 AM through 5:00 PM Monday through Friday, and on the weekend prior to Election Day. Check the BOE's website at [vote.nyc.ny.us](https://www.vote.nyc.ny.us) for a list of dates pertaining to each election.

**By-mail absentee voting**

Requests for an absentee ballot by mail must be in writing and must reach the BOE office no later than the 7th day before an election. Absentee ballot applications can be downloaded from the BOE's website at [vote.nyc.ny.us](https://www.vote.nyc.ny.us) and are available in any of the five languages. The application requires postage.

The application requires the following information:

- Name
- Address on voter registration application
- Mailing address (if different)
- Reason for requesting absentee ballot
- The type of election (primary, general, special) and date
- Signature

The ballot requires postage; ask at the post office for the required postage. To be counted, the completed absentee ballot must be postmarked by the day before Election Day and must reach the BOE no later than 7 days after the election, or be delivered to the absentee's polling site on Election Day.



# Using the Paper Ballot Optical Scanning Voting System and the Ballot Marking Device (BMD) in New York City

Since 2010, voters in New York fill out paper ballots, which they then feed into an optical scanner which records and tabulates the votes for all of the election districts at the poll site. As they are recorded by the scanner, the paper ballots drop into a locked box below the scanner, which also retains a facsimile of each ballot. This system allows for audits and re-counts which were not possible with the older lever machines.

In addition to the optical scanners, at least one Ballot Marking Device (BMD) is available at each polling place. These devices do not count votes. The BMDs enable the voter to mark a paper ballot which can be inserted into the optical scanner and counted with the other ballots cast at the poll site.

Any voter, including voters with disabilities, may use the BMD to view or listen to the ballot in any of the required languages (English, Spanish, Mandarin Chinese, Cantonese, Bengali and Korean). The voter can then use the BMD's ATM-style touch screen, the Braille-enhanced keypad, the sip and puff device, or rocker paddles to mark his or her ballot.



The Board of Elections demonstrates how to use the new optical scanning voting system.  
Source: NYC Board of Elections

# Questions and Answers Related to Voting

Why do we register in order to vote?	To determine eligibility to vote, and as a means of identifying voters.
Why should I enroll in a political party?	<p>In New York State, if you are enrolled in a political party, you may vote in that party’s primary election and help select the candidates who will run on that party’s ticket in the general election. You can also sign party petitions to help get a candidate on the ballot.</p> <p>At the general election, you may vote for any candidate of any party, regardless of party enrollment.</p>
When were changes made to the U.S. Constitution regarding eligibility for voting?	<p>In 1870, the 15th Amendment gave the right to vote to all citizens regardless of “race, color or previous condition of servitude.”</p> <p>.....</p> <p>In 1920, the 19th Amendment gave the right to vote to women.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>In 1964, the 24th Amendment removed the poll tax as a requirement for voting for President, Vice President, and U.S. Congress (Senators and Members of the House of Representatives).</p> <p>.....</p> <p>In 1971, the 26th Amendment lowered the voting age to 18 (it had previously been 21).</p>
Will I be called for jury duty if I register?	Jury duty lists come from many sources — the Department of Motor Vehicles, tax rolls, etc. — as well as voter registration lists.
How do I judge a candidate?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1 Decide which issues are of most importance to you and what qualities you want in a leader.</li><li>2 Gather information about the candidate.</li><li>3 Evaluate the candidate’s stands on issues.</li><li>4 Learn how other people view the candidate.</li><li>5 See through distortion techniques — name calling, appeals to prejudice, passing the blame, promising the sky, evading real issues, etc.</li><li>6 Watch and listen to debates and town halls.</li><li>7 Read articles in newspapers, magazines and online.</li></ol>



# Political Vocabulary

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## Affidavit ballot

A paper ballot used by a voter whose name does not appear in the registration book at the polls, and who signs a statement attesting to his or her identity and right to vote.

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## Amendment

A revision or change to an existing law, or provision of a Constitution.

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## Assembly district (AD)

A geographical division of New York State entitled by reason of population to have one representative in the New York State Assembly, the political unit which forms the basis for designating election districts.

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## Automatic voter registration (AVR)

The process by which eligible citizens who interact with government agencies are registered to vote unless they decline, and agencies transfer voter registration electronically to election officials.

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## Ballot marking device (BMD)

A piece of equipment which enables a physically or visually disabled voter to mark a paper ballot independently and in private at a poll site on Election Day. A BMD features an ATM-style touch screen, a Braille-enhanced keyboard, audio directions, a sip and puff device, and rocker paddles. The voter can view or listen to the ballot in the following languages: English, Spanish, Mandarin Chinese, Cantonese, and Korean.

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## Bipartisan

Cooperation between the two major political parties.

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## Cabinet

An advisory group appointed by an executive, and usually composed of department heads.

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## Coalition

Two or more groups that join forces in pursuit of the same political goals.

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## Constituency

The residents of a legislative district; the district itself.

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## Designee

A person named by a party petition for a place on the primary ballot, either to be that party's candidate for political office, or as a candidate for a party office.

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## Early in-person voting

The process by which voters are permitted to cast votes early at conveniently located voting centers, up to 10 per borough.

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## Early voting

The process by which voters can vote prior to the scheduled Election Day. Types of early voting systems include no-excuse absentee voting, early in-person voting, and voting by mail.

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## Election district (ED)

The smallest physical subdivision of an Assembly District into which voters are grouped.

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## Electorate

People as a whole who are entitled to vote.

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## Gerrymander

The division of a state, city, or county into voting districts in a way that gives unfair advantage to one party in an election.

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## Incumbent

The current office-holder.

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## Independent

A member of a group or organization of voters which nominates a candidate for public office and is not one of the recognized parties.

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## Insurgent

A designee for public office or party office who opposes the incumbent or established political "organization" designee.

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## Lobbyist

A spokesperson for an interest group who presses for passage of legislation in the interest of its members.

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**No-excuse absentee voting**

The process by which eligible voters may acquire and cast an absentee ballot without any justification.

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**Non-partisan**

An election in which the candidates are not designated by a major party affiliation.

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**One person, one vote**

A phrase describing U.S. Supreme Court rulings that required legislative districts of equal population.

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**Optical scanner**

Electronically operated equipment that records and tabulates votes marked on a paper ballot.

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**Patronage**

The policy of awarding jobs and business favors in return for political support.

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**Plank**

A component of a party platform that states a position on a particular issue.

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**Platform**

A set of principal goals promulgated by a political party or candidate in order to appeal to the general public.

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**Political party**

An organization of voters who nominate and/or support candidates for public office. In order to have a permanent line on the New York State ballot, a political party must have received at least 50,000 votes in the most recent gubernatorial election.

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**Primary election**

A political party election for choosing party leaders and candidates who will run with the party's endorsement in the general election. One must be enrolled in a political party in order to vote in its primary, unless a party specifically does not require it, or one is in a jurisdiction with an open primary.

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**Proposition**

A law for which the State Constitution requires voter approval. It deals with the issuance or sale of state bonds and does not amend the Constitution.

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**Quorum**

The number of members of a committee or organization who must be present before business may be transacted.

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**Ratification**

The process by which legislatures, conventions, or the voting public accept or reject changes in government.

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**Reapportionment**

The process by which representatives are redistributed to the states to assure that each district has, to the greatest extent possible, roughly the same population as every other district in the country.

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**Redistricting**

The process by which congressional, state legislative and local district boundaries are redrawn to reflect changes in population following the national census every ten years.

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**Rescind**

To cancel, repeal, or revoke a law.

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**Special election**

An election held to temporarily fill a vacancy resulting from an elected official's resignation, removal, or death.

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**Suffrage**

The right to vote granted by a constitution or law.

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