

DELAWARE COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA VOTER'S HANDBOOK

Making Democracy Work®

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Elections in Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania election law requires that elections be held as follows.

Every Odd-Numbered Year - <u>Municipal</u> elections are held on the Tuesday after the first Monday in November.

- Judges of courts of record of the various judicial districts and counties; and county, city, borough, township, ward, school district and election officers are elected in the municipal election.
- Prior to that, **primary contests** for the two established parties (Republican and Democratic) are held on the third Tuesday in May.

Every Even-Numbered Year - <u>General</u> elections are held on the Tuesday after the first Monday in November.

- President and Vice President of the United States, United States Senators, Representatives in Congress, Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Attorney General, Auditor, Treasurer and Senators and Representatives in the General Assembly are elected in the general election.
- Prior to that, **primary contests** are held on the third Tuesday of May, except in presidential election years, when the primary is held on the fourth Tuesday of April.

Ballot questions may be included in any year.

About the Term "General Election": In everyday usage, "general election" is often used to mean any election that occurs in November, regardless of year.

Municipal Elections (Elections in Odd-numbered Years)

JUDICIAL CONTESTS



The court system in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania is composed of the appellate courts, the Courts of Common Pleas, and the minor courts. Candidates for judicial office in Pennsylvania can run on the slate of a single political party (e.g., Republican, Democratic). However, in many cases judicial candidates cross-file with both major political parties for the primary elections in May. If the candidate wins both party primaries, then the candidate runs unopposed in the November election.

The mandatory retirement age for justices and judges throughout Pennsylvania is age 75.

Appellate Courts

The highest appellate (appeals) court in Pennsylvania is the Supreme Court, which is made up of seven elected justices. The two intermediate appellate courts in Pennsylvania are the Superior Court and the Commonwealth Court. Supreme Court justices and intermediate appellate court judges are elected for an initial term of ten years, after which they can be retained for another term by a state-wide yes or no vote in a November election.

Courts of Common Pleas

The Courts of Common Pleas are Pennsylvania's general trial courts. These courts are organized into 60 districts; the Court of Common Pleas in Delaware County is District 32. This court hears civil cases involving substantial amounts of money and holds trials for serious crimes. Judges on the Court of Common Pleas are elected for a term of ten years, after which they can be retained for another term by a yes or no vote in a November election.

Magisterial District Courts

One of Pennsylvania's minor courts, the Magisterial District Court is the lowest level of judicial authority in Pennsylvania and where most people experience the judicial system for the first time. Magisterial district court judges handle all traffic cases, other minor criminal cases, and civil cases involving small amounts of money. Magisterial district court judges do not have to be members of the Pennsylvania Bar Association, but they are required to satisfy training requirements before serving. Each magisterial district court judge is elected for a term of six years.

MAGISTERIAL DISTRICT COURTS BY MUNICIPALITY

The Magisterial District Court system in Delaware County is made up of 30 districts. A single judge presides over each district court. The table below shows which magisterial district court serves which municipalities or sections of municipalities. Note that the numbers within parentheses are precincts within a ward.

Municipality	Magisterial District Court	Ward (Precincts)
Aldan Borough	32-2-52	
Aston Township	32-2-38	
Bethel Township	32-2-49	
Brookhaven Borough	32-2-39	
Chadds Ford Township	32-2-49	
Chester, City of	32-1-20	Wards 1,2
Chester, City of	32-1-21	Wards 3-7
Chester, City of	32-1-22	Wards 8-11
Chester Heights Borough	32-2-48	
Chester Township	32-2-39	
Clifton Heights Borough	32-2-52	
Collingdale Borough	32-1-23	
Colwyn Borough	32-2-37	
Concord Township	32-2-49	
Darby Borough	32-2-37	
Darby Township	32-2-40	
East Lansdowne Borough	32-2-47	
Eddystone Borough	32-1-31	
Edgmont Township	32-2-48	
Folcroft Borough	32-2-40	
Glenolden Borough	32-2-42	
Haverford Township	32-1-25	Wards 1, 2, 7
Haverford Township	32-2-53	Wards 3-6, 8
Haverford Township	32-1-24	Ward 9
Lansdowne Borough	32-2-47	
Lower Chichester Township	32-1-36	
Marcus Hook Borough	32-1-36	
Marple Township	32-1-24	Wards 1, 3, 4
Marple Township	32-1-27	Wards 2, 5-7
Media Borough	32-1-28	
Middletown Township	32-2-48	
Millbourne Borough	32-1-33	
Morton Borough	32-1-32	
Nether Providence Township	32-1-28	Wards 2-4, 6, 7
Nether Providence Township	32-1-30	Wards 1, 5
Newtown Township	32-2-43	
Norwood Borough	32-2-42	
Parkside Borough	32-2-39	
Prospect Park Borough	32-2-44	

Radnor Township	32-2-43	Wards 1-3, 6
Radnor Township	32-1-27	Wards 4, 5, 7
Ridley Township	32-1-31	Wards 1, 4, 6, 9
Ridley Township	32-1-30	Wards 2, 3, 5, 7, 8
Ridley Park Borough	32-2-44	
Rose Valley Borough	32-2-46	
Rutledge Borough	32-1-31	
Sharon Hill Borough	32-2-37	
Springfield Township	32-2-54	Ward 1; Ward 2 (1,3); Ward 5, Ward 6
Springfield Township	32-1-32	Ward 2 (2); Ward 3, 4, 7
Swarthmore Borough	32-1-28	
Thornbury Township	32-2-49	
Tinicum Township	32-2-44	
Trainer Borough	32-1-36	
Upland Borough	32-2-39	
Upper Chichester Township	32-1-36	Ward 1, 2, 5
Upper Chichester Township	32-2-38	Ward 3, 4
Upper Darby Township	32-1-34	Ward 1 (1-3, 8); Ward 3 (2, 4, 6-10); Ward 4 (1, 4);
Upper Darby Township	32-2-52	Ward 2
Upper Darby Township	32-1-35	Ward 1 (4-7, 9); Ward 3 (1, 3, 5, 11); Ward 4 (2, 3, 5-11); Ward 5 (3, 8)
Upper Darby Township	32-1-33	Ward 5 (1, 7, 10); Ward 6 (1-4, 10, 12); Ward 7 (2-5, 8, 10)
Upper Darby Township	32-2-51	Ward 5 (2, 4-6, 9); Ward 6 (5-9, 11); Ward 7 (1, 6, 7, 9, 11)
Upper Providence Township	32-2-46	
Yeadon Borough	32-2-47	

COUNTY GOVERNMENT CONTESTS



Elected Delaware County officials are as follows.

The five-member *County Council* is the legislative body for the county. In addition, it is directly responsible for the operations of most offices. The powers and duties of the County Council are determined by the county's Home Rule Charter.

The *District Attorney* is the chief prosecutor for the county.

The *Sheriff* is the County's chief law enforcement officer and has full powers to enforce the law and make arrests.

The *Controller* is responsible for overseeing and controlling the expenditure of County funds. The Controller's office prepares the financial data audited by the county auditors and publishes the data in the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR).

The principal responsibility of the *Register of Wills* is to probate wills and accept the filing of all requisite documents to complete the administration of a decedent's estate. The Register of Wills also (a) serves as Clerk of the Orphans' Court, which serves as the filing office and custodian of records involving estate litigation, adoptions and guardianship; and (b) issues all marriage licenses.

The table below shows which elected Delaware County officials will be up for election in any given odd-numbered year. Note that council members' terms are designated as overlapping, which means that all five Council members' terms do not begin, or end, in the same year.

Election Year	Offices Up for Election in Delaware County
First odd-numbered election year after a	2 County Council members (4-yr. term, overlapping)
Presidential election year	Sheriff (4-yr. term)
	Controller (4-yr. term)
	Register of Wills (4-yr. term)
Second odd-numbered election year after a	3 County Council members (4-yr. term, overlapping)
Presidential election year	District Attorney (4-yr. term)

LOCAL GOVERNMENT CONTESTS



Delaware County has four different types of municipalities: Borough, First-class Township, Second-class Township, and City. The County has 27 boroughs, 21 townships, and one city. Each of the 49 municipalities in Delaware County is categorized in ways that affect the organization of that municipality and how it operates. See the list below; municipalities marked with an asterisk (*) have home rule governments.

Municipalities in Delaware County

1 City

1. Chester*

27 Boroughs

- 2. Aldan
- 3. Brookhaven
- 4. Chester Heights
- 5. Clifton Heights
- 6. Collingdale
- 7. Colwyn
- 8. Darby
- 9. East Lansdowne
- 10. Eddystone
- 11. Folcroft
- 12. Glenolden
- 13. Lansdowne
- 14. Marcus Hook
- 15. Media
- 16. Millbourne
- 17. Morton
- 18. Norwood
- 19. Parkside
- 20. Prospect Park
- 21. Ridley Park
- 22. Rose Valley
- 23. Rutledge
- 24. Sharon Hill
- 25. Swarthmore

- 26. Trainer
- 27. Upland
- 28. Yeadon

12 First-class Townships

- 1. Aston
- 2. Darby
- 3. Haverford*
- 4. Lower Chichester
- 5. Marple
- 6. Nether Providence
- 7. Radnor*
- 8. Ridley
- 9. Springfield
- 10. Tinicum
- 11. Upper Chichester
- 12. Upper Darby*

9 Second-class Townships

- 1. Bethel
- 2. Chadds Ford
- 3. Chester*
- 4. Concord*
- 5. Edgemont
- 6. Middletown*
- 7. Newtown
- 8. Thornbury
- 9. Upper Providence*

City

Designated by the State as a third-class city, the City of Chester is governed by a five-person City Council, including a mayor. Under Chester's home-rule form of government, the council has been given all the legislative power to create ordinances, rules, and regulations.

Council members are elected at large to serve the entire city. Council members serve for 4-year, overlapping terms; this means that all five council members' terms do not begin, or end, in the same election year.

Borough

The governing body of a borough is an elected Council. The number of council members varies by borough. Council members are elected for 4-year, overlapping terms. This means that all council members' terms do not begin, or end, in the same election year.

Elected borough officials can include the following.

- Council members (4-year term, overlapping)
- Mayor (4-year term)
- Tax Collector (4-year term)
- Auditor (6-year term)
- Constable (6-year term)
- Judge of Election (4-year term)
- Inspector of Election (4-year term)

Township

In Pennsylvania, townships are classified as first class or second class. First-class townships have Boards of Commissioners, and second-class townships have Boards of Supervisors. All townships are second-class townships unless they meet a population density of 300 persons per square mile and elect, by referendum, to become a first-class township.

First-class Townships

First-class townships have at least five commissioners, elected for four-year, overlapping terms. This means that all commissioners' terms do not begin, or end, in the same election year.

- If the township has no wards, the commissioners are elected at large.
- If the township has five or more wards, the commissioners are elected from wards.
- If the township has fewer than five wards, some commissioners are elected from wards and the remaining commissioners are elected at large.

First-class township elected officials can include the following.

- Commissioners (4-year term, overlapping)
- Treasurer (4-year term)
- Controller (4-year term)
- Tax Collector (4-year term)

- Auditor (6-year term)
- Judge of Election (4-year term)
- Inspector of Election (4-year term)

Second-class Townships

Second-class townships have either three or five supervisors, elected at large for six-year, overlapping terms. This means that all supervisors' terms do not begin, or end, in the same election year.

Second-class township elected officials can include the following.

- Supervisors (6-year term, overlapping)
- Tax Collector (4-year term)
- Auditor (6-year term)
- Judge of Election (4-year term)
- Inspector of Election (4-year term)

SCHOOL DISTRICT CONTESTS

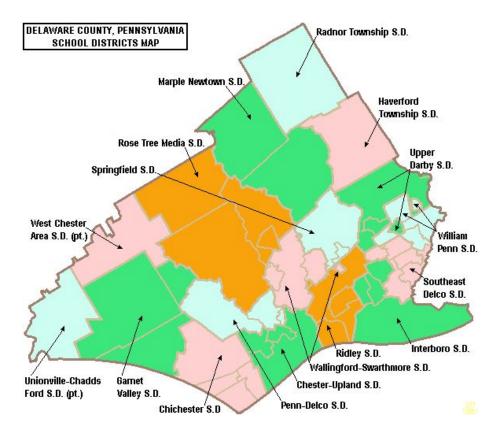


Boards of school directors are the controlling and governing agencies for local school districts. School districts are administered by nine-member school boards elected for four-year, overlapping terms. Some districts have opted for district-wide (at-large) elections, while others have preferred to elect directors by region or using a combination of at-large and regional elections. The 17 school districts that serve Delaware County residents are listed below, along with the municipalities included in each.

- 1. Chester Upland School District Chester City, Chester Township, Upland Borough
- 2. **Chichester School District** Upper Chichester Township, Lower Chichester Township, Marcus Hook Borough, Trainer Borough
- 3. Garnet Valley School District Bethel Township, Chester Heights Borough, Concord Township
- 4. Haverford Township School District Haverford Township
- 5. **Interboro School District** Glenolden Borough, Norwood Borough, Prospect Park Borough, Tinicum Township
- 6. Marple Newtown School District Marple Township, Newtown Township
- 7. Penn Delco School District Aston Township, Brookhaven Borough, Parkside Borough
- 8. Radnor Township School District Radnor Township

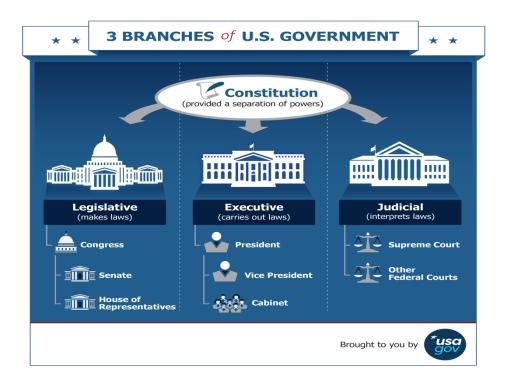
- 9. Ridley School District Ridley Township, Ridley Park Borough, Eddystone Borough
- 10. **Rose Tree Media School District** Edgmont Township, Media Borough, Middletown Township, Upper Providence Township
- 11. **Southeast Delco School District** Collingdale Borough, Darby Township, Folcroft Borough, Sharon Hill Borough
- 12. **Springfield School District** Springfield Township, Morton Borough
- 13. **Upper Darby School District** Upper Darby Township, Millbourne Borough, Clifton Heights Borough
- 14. **Wallingford-Swarthmore School District** Nether Providence Township, Rose Valley Borough, Swarthmore Borough, Rutledge Borough
- 15. **William Penn School District** Aldan Borough, Colwyn Borough, Darby Borough, East Lansdowne Borough, Lansdowne Borough, Yeadon Borough
- 16. Unionville-Chadds Ford School District Chadds Ford Township (Delaware County)
- 17. West Chester Area School District Thornbury Township (Delaware County)

Pennsylvania permits school board candidates to cross-file with both major political parties for the primary elections in May. If the candidate wins both party primaries, then the candidate runs unopposed in the November election.



General Elections (Elections in Even-numbered Years) FEDERAL CONTESTS

The elected members of the federal government are the members of the Legislative branch (Congress), and the president and vice president, who run as a team. The Congress consists of the House of Representatives and the Senate.



President and Vice President

The candidates for president and vice president run as a team in the November election, with the winning team serving a four-year term. They are not, however, elected directly by the people. In the primary election, Pennsylvania voters who are registered as Republicans or Democrats vote for the delegates who support a particular presidential candidate. Subsequently each party holds a national convention where delegates nominate the president and vice president. In November, although these candidates' names appear on the ballot, voters actually vote for a candidate's presidential "electors", who are members of the Electoral College who cast votes on behalf of a state's citizens.

The Electoral College consists of 538 electors. A majority of 270 electoral votes is required to elect the president. A state's allotment of electors equals the number of members in its Congressional delegation: one for each member in the House of Representatives plus two (for the Senators). Pennsylvania has 20 electoral votes. Forty-eight states, including Pennsylvania, have a "winner-take-all" system, meaning all of the state's electoral votes are pledged to the candidate who won the state's popular vote. The final vote for president and vice president occurs at the meeting of the Electoral College in December.

United States Senator

Each state in the United States elects two members at large to the U.S. Senate, making it a body of 100 members. Senators from a given state are elected in different even-numbered years and serve for a six-year term. The presiding officer of the Senate is the Vice President of the United States, and, in his absence, it is the President Pro Tempore, who is customarily the senior member of the party holding a majority of seats.

United States Representative

Each state is assigned a number of representatives based upon the most recent population census, making a total of 435 voting members in the House of Representatives. Congressional representatives are elected from single-member congressional districts drawn according to state law. Each district represents approximately 700,000 people. Representatives serve a two-year term.

Delaware County has been recently assigned to the 5th Congressional District in a new map prepared by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court. After the 2020 U.S. census, new apportionments of representatives will be assigned to the states, which will draw new congressional districts accordingly.

PENNSYLVANIA STATE CONTESTS

Like the federal government, Pennsylvania has three branches: Executive, Legislative and Judicial. This topic describes the Executive and Legislative branches. The state-level judicial positions are described in the JUDICIAL CONTESTS section.

The Pennsylvania state legislature (General Assembly) consists of two bodies: a house of representatives and a senate, located in the state Capitol building in Harrisburg. A piece of legislation must be approved by both bodies (houses) and signed by the governor before it becomes law.



Five executive officers, members of the state legislature and all judicial officials are elected by the citizenry.

Pennsylvania Executive Branch

Two of Pennsylvania's five elected state executives are up for election in alternate even-numbered years: governor and lieutenant governor. In Pennsylvania, the governor and lieutenant governor run independently of one another in the primary election. However, in the general election, voters cast a single vote for the governor and lieutenant governor who have won their primary.

The other three elected officials, treasurer, attorney general and auditor general, are up for election in alternate even-numbered years.

The terms for all offices in the Executive branch are four years.

Pennsylvania Legislature

Pennsylvania House of Representatives

Each one of the 203 state representatives stands for election in even-numbered years. Each representative serves a single-member district, and each district represents approximately 60,000 Pennsylvanians. Representatives serve two-year terms.

The House of Representatives is presided over by a Speaker from the majority party.

Pennsylvania Senate

The 50 members of the Pennsylvania State Senate are elected from single-member districts for four-year terms. Half of them are elected in each even-numbered year.

The senate is presided over by the lieutenant governor who has no vote except in the event of a tie vote.

FAQs on Voting

WHO CAN VOTE? If you will be 18 by the next election, and if you have been a U.S. citizen for at least a month and a resident of PA and your election district for 30 days, you are qualified and can register to vote.

HOW DO YOU REGISTER? You can register online, by mail or in-person. ONLINE: Go to www.votespa.com or pick one up at municipal government buildings, libraries or state-run Wine & Spirit stores. Mail the form to: Voter Registration, Government Center Building, 201 W. Front Street, Media, PA 19063.
IN-PERSON: Go to the Voter Registration Office, State and Federal agencies or Pennsylvania Department of Transportation locations or through voter registration events.

WHEN CAN YOU REGISTER? You can register at any time, but you must be registered at least 15 days before the next election in order to be able to vote in that election.

WHERE DO YOU GO TO VOTE? To find your polling place, go to the PA state website, <u>www.votespa.com</u>. Polling places are open from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. on Election Day.

CAN ANYONE VOTE IN THE PRIMARY?

Pennsylvania voters can **only vote** for the candidates in the same political party you have named in your voter registration. **All voters**, no matter how registered, can vote on constitutional amendments, ballot questions, and any special election held at the same time as a primary election.

WHICH OFFICES WILL YOU BE VOTING FOR? A list of the offices that candidates are running for in a primary or a general election is available from the League of Women Voters' website, www.vote411.org and from the county website (go to www.delcopa.gov and navigate to the Bureau of Elections page). The candidates running for local government and school board offices will also be available on the county website, but in order to determine which ones will be on your particular ballot, you need to know your school district, your magisterial district and your precinct or ward within your municipality. To obtain candidate information on www.vote411.org, you will need to enter your street address.

- To find out which magisterial district you are in, see MAGISTERIAL DISTRICT COURTS BY MUNICIPALITY. Or you can go to www.delcopa.gov/courts/districtjudges.html and then click on magisterial district judges list.
- To find out which school district you are in, see the list of districts and the municipalities they cover, elsewhere in this document.
- To find out which municipality and precinct you are in, look at your Certificate of Voter Registration. If you do not have it, go to www.votespa.com to find the information for your polling place, which will include your precinct number.

Approximately a month before the election, you will be able to obtain example ballots for your polling place, at a cost of 25¢ each, at the Bureau of Elections for Delaware County, located on the ground floor of the **Government Center, 201 W. Front Street in Media**. The Bureau phone number is **610-891-4673**. A hard-copy list of candidates, organized by precinct and totaling 100+ pages, is available to review at the Bureau of Elections. Ballot questions may or may not be included on the election ballot.

WHO DOES WHAT AT THE POLLS? When you arrive at your polling place, you may be approached by people supporting various parties or candidates. There is no restriction on who can be outside. Inside the polling place, however, the state of Pennsylvania specifies that only the following people may be present:

- 1. Precinct Election Officials. These include the Judge of Election, the Inspectors (Majority and Minority), appointed clerks and machine operators.
- 2. Voters in the process of voting but no more than ten voters at a time. Others waiting to vote must wait outside the area where voting is occurring.
- 3. Persons lawfully providing assistance to voters.
- 4. Poll watchers. Poll watchers are registered voters in the county who have been appointed by a party or candidate to observe at the precinct. One poll watcher per party and one poll watcher per candidate may be inside at any given time. Watchers must remain at least six feet away from the area where voting is occurring.
- 5. Overseers are registered voters of the precinct who may be appointed, upon petition, by all of the judges of the county Court of Common Pleas to supervise the election. Two overseers per precinct may be appointed, and they must belong to two different political parties.
- 6. Constables and Deputy Constables for the purpose of preserving the peace.

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF YOU ARE NOT ALLOWED TO VOTE? If for any reason you are prevented from voting while at your polling place, you may request a provisional ballot. The Board of Elections will determine the status of provisional ballots within seven days after the election. When you submit a provisional ballot, you will be given a ballot identification receipt that includes a coded identifying number associated with your ballot. Seven days after the election, you can use this identifying number to find out if your provisional ballot counted, partially counted or did not count. To check the status of your ballot, you can either call 1-877-VOTESPA or go to www.pa.gov.

HOW DOES ABSENTEE VOTING WORK? State law provides that you may vote by absentee ballot if you have a medical condition or are absent from your municipality on Election Day. The steps to take are:

- Apply for the absentee ballot. The last day to apply for an absentee ballot is the last Tuesday prior to Election Day. Absentee Ballot Applications for registered voters of Delaware County are available upon request at the Bureau of Elections. Applications may also be downloaded from the county website (go to www.delcopa.gov and navigate to the Bureau of Elections page).
- **Fill out and return the absentee ballot** by mail or in person. It should be received by the Bureau of Elections by 5 PM on the Friday before the election. **Pennsylvania State law** prohibits anyone other than **the voter** from hand delivering a voted absentee ballot to the Delaware County Bureau of Elections, except for those with disabilities.
- Or go in person to the Bureau of Elections office, complete an application, fill out your absentee ballot in the office, and hand it in then.

In addition, there are allowances for emergency absentee voting and for permanently disabled voters. Check the Delaware County website (below) for details.

Websites to consult for further information:

<u>www.votespa.com</u> The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's website provides answers to voting questions, including

- absentee ballot and mail-in ballot applications and status
- voter registration status
- finding your polling place
- provisional ballot status
- election calendar
- election night returns
- reporting election complaints

www.delcopa.gov This is Delaware County's website. Navigate to the Bureau of Elections page.

<u>www.vote411.org</u> This is the League of Women Voters' website, which provides candidate information for many election districts.

Visit our <u>Voter Toolkit</u> found on the League of Women Voters Central Delaware County site <u>www.lwvcdc.org</u> to find information on voter registration, election calendar, mail-in and absentee ballots, and voting machines.

Image Citations

P 3, 5, 6, 9. Microsoft Corp [Clipart]. (n.d.).

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