

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF GREATER PITTSBURGH, INC.

Election Q & A

These are the most frequently asked questions about elections in Allegheny County (and the answers). If you have other questions not answered here, call the League of Women Voters of Greater Pittsburgh at (412) 261-4281 or email info@pgh.lwv.org.

1. What is the deadline to register to vote?

Pennsylvania residents may register to vote up to *15 days prior to the next election*. If your 18th birthday is the day of the election or before, you may register to vote. If you miss this deadline you will be informed that your registration will not take effect until the following election. If you do not receive your Voter Registration ID in time for the next election, you can request to vote with a Provisional Ballot.

2. How long will it take to receive my Voter Registration ID card?

After you register to vote and after you turn 18 years old, you can expect to receive your Voter Registration ID card in the mail in 2 - 4 weeks of registering. The envelope looks official. Keep your card in a safe place! You must have received your Voter Registration ID card (which confirms you are listed in the voter rolls) in order to vote in the next election. If you do not receive your Voter Registration ID in time, you can request to vote with a Provisional Ballot.

3. Am I still registered to vote? I can't remember when I last voted?

If you are a registered voter but you have not voted for 5 years or if you have missed voting in two consecutive Federal Elections, you may be identified as an "inactive" voter.

You may check the status of your voter registration by contacting the Allegheny County Voter Registration Office (412) 350-4500. For other County Voter Registration Offices, check [here](#). If you discover that your status has been changed to "inactive" while at your polling place on Election Day, you will need to sign an affidavit before voting a regular ballot.

4. I moved after the voter registration cut-off date. Can I still vote?

If you have moved from the residence where you are registered to vote to another residence in Pennsylvania *less than 30 days before an election*, you will vote at the polling place of *your old address*.

If you moved (more than 30 days before an election), but did not update your voter registration, you may vote at the polling place for your old address for *one election only*.

To be eligible to vote in the next election, you must live at your new address for *at least 30 days before the election*. You must also update your voter registration to change your address to your new address. Go to [VotesPA.com](https://www.VotesPA.com) to change the address on your voter registration. Select the box that says “Change of Address”.

If you are challenged about your voting status, you may vote a **Provisional Ballot**. Read about the process [here](#).

5. Where can I get a printed registration form?

Printed voter registration applications are available at County Election Offices, Pennsylvania Drivers’ License Centers, many state government offices, and from the League of Women Voters. You can download the 4-page Voter Registration Application form from [VotesPA.com](https://www.VotesPA.com). If you need assistance, call the PA Department of State at 1(877) 868-3772.

It is easy to register to vote online at [VotesPA.com](https://www.VotesPA.com) if you have a Pennsylvania Driver’s License or PennDOT ID card. Your signature from those cards will be sent to your county voter registration office to become part of your record.

6. I changed my name? Can I vote?

If you change your name, for example after marriage or divorce, you must update your voter registration. On the [Voter Registration Form](#), select the box that says, “Change of Name”. When you go to the polling place to vote, *bring your identification with your new name*.

If you are challenged about your voting status, you may vote a **Provisional Ballot**. Read about the process [here](#).

7. Can I vote by Mail-in Ballot even if I’ll be home on election day?

YES! Recent voting reforms have established a new convenient way for Pennsylvanians to vote by Mail-in Ballot starting with the 2020 Primary Election. The process is similar to voting by Absentee Ballot. Just answer “NO” to 3 questions to be directed to the Mail-in Ballot option. You may apply for this ballot without needing a reason.

Online: Registered voters with a valid PA Driver’s License or Photo ID from the PA Department of Transportation (PennDOT) can apply for your ballot online [here](#).

By mail: Fifty days before an election, voters can download the Mail-in Ballot

application form [here](#). A Spanish language Mail-in Ballot application form link is provided [here](#). Print, complete, sign and deliver or mail the application to your County Election Office.

Allegheny County Elections Division

542 Forbes Ave., Suite 604
Pittsburgh, PA 15219-2953

In person: Fifty days before an election, voters can stop by a County Elections Office to apply in person and have your ballot presented to you. To find the address of your Pennsylvania County Elections Office outside of Allegheny County, look [here](#). If you live in Allegheny County, the Allegheny County Elections Office address is above.

By phone: Call your County Elections Board. The phone number of the Allegheny County Election Office is (412) 350-4500.

IMPORTANT: Your County Election Office must receive your application for a Mail-in Ballot no later than 5PM on the Tuesday before the election.

8. Can I vote by Absentee Ballot? How do I vote by Absentee Ballot?

If you are a registered voter who will be away on Election Day for reasons like college, work or vacation, or have a physical disability or illness that prevents you from going to the polling place, are a member of the military, or have a conflict due to the celebration of a religious holiday, you can vote with an Absentee Ballot.

Online: If you have a valid PA Driver's License or Photo ID from the PA Department of Transportation (PennDOT) you may apply for your ballot online [here](#).

By mail: You may download an application for an absentee ballot [here](#). Print, complete, sign and deliver or mail the application to:

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In person: Stop by your county election office to apply in person. To find the address of your Pennsylvania County Elections Office outside of Allegheny County, look [here](#). If you live in Allegheny County, the Allegheny County Elections Office address is above.

By phone: You may request an Absentee Ballot Application from Allegheny County by calling (412) 350-4500.

IMPORTANT: Your County Elections Office must receive your application for an Absentee Ballot no later than 5 pm on the Tuesday before the election.

9. If I request a Mail-in or Absentee Ballot, but don't use it, can I go to my polling place and vote a regular ballot?

Yes. A new law outlines voter-spoiling of Mail-in or Absentee Ballots beginning only in the November 2020 General Election. A voter may remit their Mail-in or Absentee Ballot and the return envelope with their name on it at their polling place and sign a declaration. The voter will then be allowed to vote a regular ballot at their polling place.

10. It's two days before the election. I am going out of town unexpectedly, or I am sick. Can I vote?

Yes. In emergency situations (such as unexpected illness or disability or last-minute absence) after the absentee ballot deadline of 5 p.m. on the Tuesday before the election, you can request an **Emergency Absentee Ballot**. More than one voter may now designate the same person to deliver their ballot by 8 p.m. on election day.

11. What is an Annual Mail-in or Absentee Ballot?

You now have an option to request to be added to the list where you'll receive an application to renew your Mail-in or Absentee Ballot request each year. This only applies if you have a *permanent* disability or illness when applying for this option. Once your application is approved, you will automatically receive ballots for the remainder of the year and you do not need to submit an application for each election.

12. I am registered as an Independent or in a minor party. Can I vote in a Primary Election?

Pennsylvania is a closed Primary state. Only registered Democratic or Republican party members may vote on party nominations to become candidates in the November election. However, all registered voters can vote with a third ballot on all ballot questions, retention of judges, amendments to the state constitution, and bond issues, in Primary and in Special Elections.

13. How can I change my party affiliation?

You can change your party affiliation by updating your voter registration online, by mail, or in person. A link is provided [here](#). On the voter registration form, select the box in #3 that says **Change of Party** and then select your new party affiliation in #8. You can submit the form online or print it and mail it to your County Election Office. You can also go to your County Elections Office and make the change in person. Changes made more than 15 days before an election will take effect for that election. Find your County Elections Office address [here](#).

14. What identification do I need at the polls?

You must have an ID if you are *voting for the first time OR will be voting for the*

first time in a polling place where you haven't voted before. Acceptable IDs for first time voters include a driver's license, passport, military, student or employee ID, or some other form of US or PA government issued ID such as a Voter Identification Card, a firearm permit, or a current utility bill, bank statement, paycheck, or government check. Any ID without your photo must have your address on it. If you are not a first time voter or not voting for the first time in a polling place, ID is not required in Pennsylvania, unless your identity is challenged.

15. What do I do if my right to vote is challenged at the polls?

See the Judge of Elections at your polling place. If your right to vote is challenged at the polls on Election Day, you are in the right polling place, and the problem cannot be resolved by the Judge of Elections, you have the right to ask for and vote by Provisional Ballot. If it is later determined that you were eligible to vote, your ballot will be counted. You will be given instructions on how to determine if your vote was counted. If you are challenged or have an emergency the Pennsylvania Department of State provides a [Help Line](#) or telephone: 1(877) 868-3772. *(Interpreters are provided)*

16. If I am currently incarcerated, can I vote?

You are not eligible to register to vote and vote if you are currently incarcerated for conviction of a felony [here](#). If you are confined in a penal institution for any other conviction, you may vote by Mail-in or Absentee Ballot.

After release, persons who had been incarcerated for a felony (“returning citizens”) may re-register to vote.

17. How do I find my polling place?

Your polling place is printed on your Voter Registration ID Card or you may call your County Elections Office, in Allegheny County, call (412) 350-4500. You may also look it up online [here](#).

18. What municipality, ward, and district am I in?

You may check your voting municipality, ward, and district at the [VotesPA website](#) or [Vote411](#). Or you may call your County's Election Office. In Allegheny County, call (412) 350-4500.

19. I am living overseas or in the military and based away from home. How can I vote?

Allegheny County voting information for service members and those living overseas can be found [here](#). The Federal government provides additional guidelines and recommendations [here](#). If your requested Absentee Ballot is not received within enough time to meet the Pennsylvania election deadline, then you may need to fill out a Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot.

20. I am blind. Can the League of Women Voters help me with information on the candidates and ballot questions?

You may call the League of Women Voters of Greater Pittsburgh's Community Information Center to have this information as it is provided in the Voter's Guide read to you. Call (412) 261-4284.

21. How may I get voting assistance at the polls?

If you need help voting due to age or disability, you may bring a person of your choice to assist you in the voting process. The first time you have someone help you vote, the election officials at your polling place will ask you to complete and sign a form called a Declaration of Need of Assistance. After this first time, your registration record will note that you completed the form. There are a few restrictions on who you may not choose as an assistant. You may not choose:

- A Judge of Elections
- Your Union Representative
- Your Employer

Additionally, an Alternative Ballot may be provided if your polling place is deemed inaccessible. You must submit an application requesting an Alternative Ballot from the County Elections Office. The Alternative Ballot Application can be found [here](#).

22. What is the current voting process in Allegheny County?

Most voters in Allegheny County will vote using a hand-marked paper ballot. Some voters will use the ES&S ExpressVote ballot-marking device to mark their ballot. All voters will use the DS200 Precinct Scanner to cast their completed ballot. Instructional videos for using the ES&S ExpressVote machine and the DS200 Precinct Scanner are provided [here](#).

23. Where can I find a sample ballot?

Newspapers no longer provide sample ballots. A few weeks before each election, the League of Women Voters provides nonpartisan voting information by home address on the site Vote411.org. Additionally, a sample ballot is posted in each polling place on Election Day. Check the Allegheny County website for a sample ballot [here](#). *You will not be permitted to call another person or use your cellphone to assist you in making your selections while voting, but you can bring printouts from Vote411.org or the LWVGP Voters Guide.*

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