**New York State Voter Registration FAQ[[1]](#footnote-0)**

**Does one vote really count?**

Yes, it does. Your vote represents your community and your interests. One vote could tip the scale on an issue or a candidate. What if everyone in your community thought that their vote did not count? What would happen?

**Am I registered to vote?**

You can look up your registration status on the NY State Voter Lookup Site: <https://voterlookup.elections.ny.gov/>

**How old do you have to be to vote?**

You must be 18 years of age or older in order to vote in the United States of America. If you are 16 or 17 you can pre-register to vote and will be automatically registered when you turn 18.

**Do I need to register for a party? What happens if I do not choose a party?**

No one is obligated to register for a political party. The state of New York has closed primary elections. What this means is that if you do register for a political party in the state of New York, you are eligible to vote in primary elections. If you do not register for a political party, you are only eligible to vote in general elections.

**How can I change my party enrollment?**

You can change your party enrollment by sending a voter registration form with your new choice to the New York Board of Elections. You may change from one party to another, from not-enrolled in a party to enroll in a party, or from enrolled in a party to not-enrolled in a party. In order to change your party affiliation in time for the 2020 presidential primary, please do so by February 14th, 2020.

**Do I have to fill out the organ donor portion of the voter registration form?**

No. The organ donor portion of the form is completely optional and is not related to registering to vote.

**What are the election dates for this year?**

* **April 18th-26th, 2020** is the Early Voting period for the Presidential Primary Election
* **April 28th, 2020** is the Presidential Primary Election
* **June 13th-21st, 2020** is the Early Voting period for the State and Federal Primary Election
* **June 23rd, 2020** is the State and Federal Primary Election
* **October 24th-November 1st, 2020** is the Early Voting Period for General Election
* **November 3rd, 2020** is the General Election

**What are the voter registration deadlines this year?**

***PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY ELECTION***

* **April 21, 2020** is the last day to postmark an application of letter of application by mail for an absentee ballot for the ***Presidential Primary Election***
* **April 27, 2020** is the last day to apply in-person for absentee ballot for the ***Presidential Primary Election***
* **April 27, 2020** is the last day to postmark ballot for the ***Presidential Primary Election*** (ballot must be received by the local board of elections no later than May 5th)
* **April 28, 2020** is the last day to deliver ballot in-person to the local board of elections (by someone other than the voter) for the ***Presidential Primary Election***

***STATE AND FEDERAL PRIMARY ELECTION***

* **June 16, 2020** is the last day to postmark an application or letter of application by mail for an absentee ballot for the ***State and Federal Primary Election***
* **June 22, 2020** is the last day to apply in-person for an absentee ballot for the ***State and Federal Primary Election***
* **June 22, 2020** is the last day to postmark ballot for the ***State and Federal Primary Election*** (it must be received by the local board of elections no later than June 30th)
* **June 23, 2020** is the last day to deliver ballot in-person to the local board of elections (by someone other than the voter) for ***State and Federal Primary Election***

***GENERAL ELECTION***

* **October 27, 2020** is the last day to postmark an application or letter of application by mail for an absentee ballot for the ***General Election***
* **November 2, 2020** is the last day to apply in-person for an absentee ballot for the ***General Election***
* **November 2, 2020** is the last day to postmark ballot for the ***General Election*** (must be received by the local board of elections no later than November 10th. Military Voter Ballots must be received no later than November 16th.)
* **November 3, 2020** is the last day to deliver ballot in-person to the local board of elections (by someone other than the voter) for the ***General Election***

**At what times do polls open on Election Day for the Presidential Primary, State and Federal Primary, and General Elections?**

* In New York City and the counties of Nassau, Suffolk, Westchester, Rockland, Orange, Putnam, Dutchess and Erie: **POLLS OPEN AT 6 AM - CLOSE AT 9 PM**
* In all other counties: **POLLS OPEN AT 12 NOON and CLOSE AT 9 PM**

**At what times to polls open**

* Go to [here](https://voterlookup.elections.ny.gov/) https://*voterlookup.elections.gov/* to find information about your early voting site, including when the polls will be open for early voting in your county.

**What is the difference between the primary and general election?**

A primary election is held by political parties in order to choose their nominees that will be running for office at an upcoming general election. In a primary, candidates in a party run against candidates in that same party.

In a general election, party nominees and candidates without political party affiliation run against each other. The general election determines the candidate that will occupy the office that is up for election.

**I already registered to vote, but I never received anything. What do I do?**

If you are sure that you registered correctly, check with the New York Board of Elections by calling, visiting in person, or going online and using the voter lookup tool: <https://voterlookup.elections.ny.gov/>

**How can I become a poll worker?**

Fill out a poll worker application and submit to your borough’s Board of Elections office. You may check the appropriate box on the voter registration form or visit the Board of Elections office in order to receive an application.

**What do I need to bring when I go vote?**

If you are a first time voter, we recommend bringing valid photo ID with you to the polls.

**What if I cannot make it to the polls on Election Day?**

You can vote by absentee ballot if you are unable to get to your voting place due to your occupation, business, studies, travel, illness, disability, hospitalization, or imprisonment (for other than a felony conviction).

**What qualifies me for an absentee ballot?**

* Absent from your county or, if a resident of New York City absent from said city, on Election Day.
* Unable to appear at the polls due to temporary or permanent illness or disability; or because you are the primary caregiver of one or more individuals who are ill or physically disabled.
* A resident or patient of a Veterans Health Administration Hospital.
* Detained in jail awaiting Grand Jury action or confined in prison after conviction for an offense other than a felony.

**How do I vote by absentee ballot?**

* Applications for Absentee Ballots are available at your county board of elections.
* You may also download a PDF version of the New York State Absentee Ballot Application Form
  + [Download English Form (pdf 485KB)](https://www.elections.ny.gov/NYSBOE/download/voting/AbsenteeBallot-English.pdf) Search NYS Absentee Ballot Form
  + [Download Spanish Form (pdf 521KB)](https://www.elections.ny.gov/NYSBOE/download/voting/AbsenteeBallot-Spanish.pdf)
* Upon completion, applications must be mailed to your [county board](https://www.elections.ny.gov/CountyBoards.html) no later than the seventh day before the election or delivered in person no later than the day before the election.
* You may also request an Absentee Ballot by sending a letter to your county board of elections. The letter must be received by your county board no earlier than 30 days and no later than seven days before the election. The letter must contain the following information:
  + the address where you are registered
  + an address where the ballot is to be sent
  + the reason for the request, and
  + the signature of the voter
* If you apply by letter, an application form will be mailed with your ballot. The application form must be completed and returned with your ballot.  
  If you cannot pick up your ballot, or will not be able to receive it through the mail, you have the right to designate someone to pick it up for you. Only that person designated on your application may pick up and deliver your ballot.  
  If you are permanently ill or disabled, you have the right to receive an Absentee Ballot for each subsequent election without further application. Simply file an application with your county board of elections indicating permanent illness or physical disability. You will then automatically receive an absentee ballot for every election until your registration is canceled.

**What happens if I get to my poll site and I am not listed?**

Ask the poll worker to check the list as well as the entire poll book to confirm that you are at the correct polling site. If your name is still not on the voting list, ask for an affidavit ballot – you have the right to vote by affidavit ballot if your name is not on the voter list.

**I have a criminal conviction. Can I still register to vote?**

The following applies if you are in the State of New York:

* If you were convicted of a felony by a state or federal court, you **CANNOT** vote if you:
  + Are currently incarcerated
  + Are on parole and have not been pardoned by the Governor - you can check this information using the DOCCS Parolee Lookup Tool: [www.doccs.ny.gov/ParoleeLookup/Lookup.aspx](http://www.doccs.ny.gov/ParoleeLookup/Lookup.aspx)
* If you were convicted of a felony by a state or federal court, you **CAN** vote if you:
  + Are on probation
  + Are on parole AND you were pardoned by the Governor - verify this using the DOCCS Parolee Lookup Tool: [www.doccs.ny.gov/ParoleeLookup/Lookup.aspx](http://www.doccs.ny.gov/ParoleeLookup/Lookup.aspx)
* If you were convicted of a misdemeanor or violation, you **CAN** vote in person if you are not incarcerated and by absentee ballot if you are still incarcerated.

1. Prepared by the New York Civic Engagement Table [↑](#footnote-ref-0)