

Voter Registration

To register to vote you must be ...

- a U.S. citizen;
- at least 18 years of age by election day;
- a resident of Michigan and the city or township where you are applying to register to vote.

How to register: You can register to vote for federal, state, and local elections by mail; at your county, city, or township clerk's office; or by visiting any Secretary of State branch office.

In addition, specified agencies providing services through the Department of Human Services, the Department of Community Health and the Department of Labor and Economic Growth offer voter registration services to their clients. Military recruitment centers also provide voter registration services.

When to register: You must register at least 30 days before the election. This gives the clerk time to process the forms and send you a Voter Identification Card. There is no need to re-register unless you move.

Change of Address: If you move *within a city or township*, you must update your address. This can be handled through your local clerk, at a Secretary of State branch office, by mail or at any other location where voter registrations are accepted.

Whenever you move to a *new city or township*, you must re-register to vote.

The residential address used for your voter registration **must be the same as** the address on your driver's license. Consequently, when you submit a driver's license address change, it will be applied to your voter registration. Similarly, when you submit a voter registration address change, it will be applied to your driver's license.

First-time voter. If you have never voted in Michigan and register by mail, **you must appear in person to vote in the first election in which you wish to participate.** This requirement does **not** apply if (1) you personally hand deliver the mail-in registration form to your county, city or township clerk's office instead of mailing the form (2) you are 60 years of age or more (3) you are disabled or (4) you are eligible to vote under the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act.

If you have never voted in Michigan and register by mail, you may also be subject to a new identification requirement provided under federal law. The identification requirements are explained on the mail-in registration form.

Outside the U.S. If you are temporarily outside the U.S., you may use a Federal Postcard Application (FPCA) form to register. The FPCA forms are distributed through U.S. embassies and military bases. A Michigan resident who moves and registers out of state may not re-register to vote in Michigan until he or she reestablishes residency here.

Absentee Voting

Absentee voter ballots are available for all elections. They provide voters with a convenient method for casting a ballot when they are unable to attend the polls on Election Day.

Who can vote absentee? As a registered voter, you may obtain an absentee voter ballot if you are:

- Age 60 years old or older
- Unable to vote without assistance at the polls
- Expecting to be out of town on election day
- In jail awaiting arraignment or trial
- Unable to attend the polls due to religious reasons
- Appointed to work as an election inspector in a precinct outside of your precinct of residence.

A person who registers to vote by mail must vote in person in the first election in which he or she participates. The restriction does not apply to overseas voters, voters who are handicapped or voters who are 60 years of age or older. (Voting in person on one governmental level clears the restriction on the other levels. For example, if a voter subject to the restriction votes in person at a school election, the voter would be free to obtain an absentee ballot for the first state election in which he or she wishes to participate.)

Requesting an Absentee Voter Ballot

Your request for an absentee voter ballot must be in writing and can be submitted to your city or township clerk. (For assistance in obtaining the address of your city or township clerk, see www.Michigan.gov/vote) Your request must include one of the six statutory reasons stated above and your signature. You must request an absentee voter ballot by mailing the [online application](#), a letter, a postcard, or a pre-printed application form obtained from your local clerk's office. Requests to have an absentee voter ballot mailed to you must be received by your clerk no later than 2 p.m. the Saturday before the election.

Once your request is received by the local clerk, your signature on the request will be checked against your voter registration record before a ballot is issued. You must be a [registered voter](#) to receive an absentee ballot. Requests for absentee voter ballots are processed immediately. Absentee voter ballots may be issued to you at your home address or any address outside of your city or township of residence.

After receiving your absentee voter ballot, you have until 8 p.m. on election day to complete the ballot and return it to the clerk's office. Your ballot will not be counted unless your signature is on the return envelope and matches your signature on file. If you received assistance voting the ballot, then the signature of the person who helped you must also be on the return envelope. Only you, a family member or person residing in your household, a mail carrier, or election official is authorized to deliver your signed absentee voter ballot to your clerk's office.

If an emergency, such as a sudden illness or family death prevents you from reaching the polls on Election Day, you may request an emergency absentee voter ballot. Requests for an emergency ballot must be submitted after the deadline for regular absentee voter ballots has passed but before 4 p.m. on Election Day. The emergency must have occurred at a time which made it impossible for you to apply for a regular absentee voter ballot. Your local clerk will have more information about emergency absentee voter ballots.

Voting is one of the most cherished and fundamental rights in our country. If you are eligible to obtain an absentee voter ballot and cannot attend the polls on Election Day, use of the absentee voter ballot is strongly encouraged.

Information from www.michigan.gov/sos/