

Frequently Asked Questions for Volunteers

How do I know if I am registered to vote?

You can check if you are registered to vote by calling your County Commissioner of Registration office or the League of Women Voters of New Jersey at 1-800-792-VOTE(8683). Once you are registered to vote, you will receive a sample ballot in the mail about a week before an election.

What is the deadline to register to vote before an election? What is the deadline to apply for a Vote by Mail Ballot? What is the deadline to change party affiliation before a primary?

You must register to vote at least 21 days before election. To obtain a Vote by Mail ballot, your mailed application must be received at least seven days prior to the election or you may apply in person by 3 p.m. the day before the election. The deadline to change your party affiliation is 55 days before the next primary election.

When do I have to re-register?

You must re-register to vote if you change your name, change your address, or if you are convicted of a felony and have served your sentence, probation, and parole. If you change your name you are entitled to vote only in the next election by signing your registration sheet at the polls with both your previous and new name. After that, you must re-register in your new name. Under certain circumstances, such as moving within the county, you may be allowed to vote by provisional ballot. However, it is suggested that you re-register every time you move to avoid any voting complications.

Do I have to declare a party to vote in a general election? Do I have to vote for my declared party in a general election?

You do not have to declare a party to vote in a general

election. You do not have to vote for your declared party in a general election. You do not need to vote a straight party ticket. You may select your choice for a particular office from any party's candidate. You do not have to vote for a complete slate.

Do I have to declare a party to vote in a primary? What does it mean if I declared myself as an "independent"?

You do have to declare a party to vote in a primary. In a primary, you may vote for only one party's candidates. If you are unaffiliated, you may declare yourself at the polls on primary election day. However, you will retain this party affiliation unless you file a party affiliation declaration form to change your affiliation. It is important to note that often people confuse "independent" with "unaffiliated". Independent is not a choice given on the party affiliation declaration form and in order to declare oneself independent it must be physically written on the form. An independent declaration could be taken as a party declaration, and therefore would mean that the registrant could not vote in a primary. In most cases, registrants' who say independent mean to declare themselves unaffiliated, meaning that they do not wish to declare themselves as part of any political party. If you do not know or remember if you declared a political party, you can find out by calling your County Commissioner of Registration.

How can I find more information about the candidates?

Researching the candidates is an important part of the voting process. Information about the candidates can be gathered in a number of ways. Often it takes a combination of all of these methods to truly learn about a candidate. First, if the candidate is an incum-

bent or has held another office, take a look at his or her voting records. How has he or she voted on issues that are important to you while in office? Also take notice of candidate endorsements. What organizations have endorsed the candidate? Contact the candidate directly to talk about your concerns in your community. Attend debates and candidates' nights. Follow media coverage on the candidates. Read campaign literature and look at the candidates' web sites. It is important to be skeptical about information produced by the candidates because they are obviously going to portray themselves in the best light. Follow what kind of campaign the candidates and their staff run. Are their campaigns clean and stick-ing to the issues or do they use dirty tactics and avoid debating or addressing the issues? Finally speak with your community, family and friends about the candidates. Other's insights can help you clarify your own, but ultimately it is important to vote based on your judgment.

How will I know where my polling place is?

You will receive a sample ballot about a week before every election. Your polling place will be located on the ballot. You may also call your County Commissioner of Registration office to locate your polling place. Polling places can also be obtained online at www.VOTE411.org.

How will I know if my registration was properly processed?

You should receive a voter registration card in the mail and a sample ballot about a week before the election. If you do not receive these things call your County Commissioner of Registration to check the status of your registration. If you believe that you should be registered to vote, show up at your polling place. If you are not on the rolls, vote by provisional ballot or go in front of an election judge on Election Day to argue for your right to vote.

Can I vote by Vote by Mail ballot (formerly absentee ballot)? What if I do not receive my absentee ballot?

Any eligible voter can choose to apply for and vote by Vote by Mail ballot and you do not have to give a reason. If you request and receive a Vote by Mail ballot you may

not vote at the polls. However, if you fail to receive your Vote by Mail ballot you may go to the polls on Election Day and vote by provisional ballot.

Do I need to bring identification with me to the polls?

You do not have to provide identification at the polls unless you did not provide the required personal identification information on your registration form or your identification numbers could not be verified. In this case, you may vote by provisional ballot and you have until the close of business on the second day after the election to provide your County Commissioner of Registration with the required ID information.

Under what circumstances do I have to vote by provisional ballot? How do I find out if my provisional ballot was counted?

You have to vote by provisional ballot if you have moved within the county and have not re-registered under your new address, if your registration information is missing, incorrect, or not complete in the poll book, you did not provide the required personal identification information on your registration form or your identification information could not be verified, or if you requested an absentee ballot and never received it.

To find out if your provisional ballot was counted, call the number given to your by your poll worker. If the ballot was not counted because you were not correctly registered to vote, the provisional ballot affirmation statement will serve as your voter registration for future elections.



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF NEW JERSEY EDUCATION FUND

204 West State Street
Trenton, New Jersey 08608
www.lwnj.org
1-800-792-VOTE(8683)