

# VOTING IN NEW JERSEY

## Who May Register

To register in New Jersey you must be a US Citizen, at least 17 years old with the understanding that you cannot vote until you turn 18, and a resident of your county for at least 30 days.

You are not eligible to register if you have been adjudged mentally incompetent, or you are on parole, probation, or serving a sentence due to a felony conviction under state or federal law. You have the right to vote upon completion of your sentence, parole or probation after re-registering.

## When To Register to Vote

At least 21 days before an election!

## When to Re-Register

You must re-register 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.
- **Change your address:** You must re-register and check off “address change” on the form. If you have moved within the county since you registered to vote and have not re-registered you have the right to vote by provisional ballot after completing an affirmation statement. Your provisional ballot serves as a registration form.
- **Are convicted of a felony:** You must re-register upon the completion of your sentence, parole or probation.

## How to Vote

You must vote in person unless you applied for an Vote by Mail ballot.

Operating instructions for voting machines are printed on the sample ballot and are available at the polls.

You have two minutes to vote. If you need help, ask a poll worker. You may change your selections until you cast your ballot.

In any election you may “write in” your own choice for a particular office. Request instructions for how to “write in” a candidate from poll workers.

If you are in line at the polling place when the polls close you have a right to vote.

If an election official challenges your eligibility and you are prevented from voting, you have the right to a hearing before a superior judge at the county courthouse on Election Day. The judge will rule on your eligibility at the hearing.

## Sample Ballot

The sample ballot is mailed to all registered voters one week before each election and is a verification of your registration: contact your County Clerk or County Commissioner of Registration if you do not receive one.

Sample Ballots contain the following information:

- Location of your polling place
- Hours polls are open
- Public questions
- Offices to be voted on, candidates names, district and municipality
- Operating instructions for the voting machines
- Instructions for how to “write in” a candidate

## Vote By Mail Ballot (Absentee)

To obtain a civilian Vote by Mail ballot, your mailed application must be received by your County Clerk at least seven days prior to the election. You may apply in person at the County Clerk's office by 3 p.m. the day before the election. The application is available from your County Clerk and can also be found online at [www.lwvnj.org](http://www.lwvnj.org).

After approval of the application, a ballot and instructions will be mailed to you. If your application is made in person within the seven-day period before the election, the ballot will be given to you at that time. Your completed Vote by Mail ballot casting your vote must reach your county Board of Elections before the close of the polls on Election Day.

If you have applied for and received a Vote by Mail ballot, you may not vote at your polling place for that election. If you do not receive your ballot, you may vote using a provisional ballot at your polling place.

## PROVISIONAL BALLOTS

Provisional ballots are paper ballots that are used at the polling place under the following circumstances:

- Your registration information is missing or is not complete in the poll book.
- You moved from your registered address to another one in the same county and did not re-register at your new address.
- You did not provide the required personal identification information on your registration form or your identification numbers could not be verified or you do not show it to the poll workers in the polling place.
- You requested a Vote by Mail ballot but you never received it.

After you give your provisional ballot to a poll worker, you must be given a number to call to find out if your ballot was counted and, if not, why not. 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.



## PARTY AFFILIATION

In New Jersey you may declare a party affiliation when registering to vote, but you are not required to do so.

**Primary Elections:** In a primary, you may vote for only your declared party's candidates. Currently, only the Democratic and Republican parties qualify for primary elections. If you are an unaffiliated voter, you may declare at the polls the day of a primary election. You retain this party affiliation unless you file a party affiliation declaration form. If you wish to change affiliation you must file a party affiliation declaration form declaring your party of choice with your Commissioner of Registration at least 55 days before the next primary election.

**General Elections:** You may select your choice for a particular office from any party's candidate.



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