

# VOTER REGISTRATION DRIVE CHECKLIST

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**PAUL D. PATE**  
IOWA SECRETARY OF STATE



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**Paul D Pate**  
**Iowa Secretary of State**

Dear Community Partner,

Thank you for taking the important step of engaging individuals in civic life and promoting participation in our democratic process.

Encouraging people to register and vote is one of the most powerful ways to strengthen communities, ensure diverse voices are heard, and shape the future of our society.

Iowa consistently ranks among the top states for election administration, with high voter turnout and strong protections for accessible, secure, and efficient voting. By helping individuals register and stay informed about voting opportunities, you are contributing to a tradition of civic engagement that sets Iowa apart and ensures that every eligible voter has the chance to participate.

This checklist is designed to support your efforts by providing guidance, best practices, and practical resources to help individuals understand their rights, access voter registration materials, and participate confidently in elections. It is important to recognize that each voter registration drive may vary in its approach and may not strictly adhere to our guidelines. I encourage contacting your local County Auditor for specific guidance tailored to your community.

Your commitment to civic engagement matters. By promoting voter registration and participation, you are helping build a stronger, more representative democracy in Iowa and beyond.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul D. Pate".



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# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SCHOOLS

- Develop a schoolwide voter engagement plan that designates staff responsible for distributing and collecting voter registration materials and ensures students regularly receive accurate information about voter registration, voting procedures, eligibility, and key deadlines.
- Designate and train a staff lead for voter registration efforts to ensure compliance with applicable laws, coordinate activities, and support consistent implementation of voter-related policies and practices.
- Partner with local election officials and community organizations to access official resources, training, and up-to-date information, as well as support voter registration and education initiatives.
- Engage students in planning and implementation by creating opportunities for student leadership in designing, promoting, and carrying out voter registration drives and civic engagement activities.
- Integrate civic education into academic and extracurricular programs to help students understand the structure of government, democratic processes, and the importance of civic participation.
- Ensure voter engagement activities are nonpartisan, inclusive, and accessible, providing equal opportunities for all eligible students to participate.
- Establish a clear timeline and communication strategy aligned with election cycles to promote awareness of registration deadlines, election dates, and opportunities to participate.
- Regularly assess and improve efforts by gathering feedback from students and staff to strengthen the effectiveness of voter registration and civic engagement initiatives.

# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ORGANIZATIONS

- Develop and implement an organizational voter engagement strategy that outlines goals, roles, and procedures for providing voter registration information and resources, including clear timelines aligned with election cycles.
- Designate and train a staff member or team to lead voter engagement efforts to ensure compliance with applicable laws, coordinate activities, and serve as a point of contact for partners and participants.
- Collaborate with local election officials and trusted community partners to access official materials, accurate information, and technical assistance for voter registration and education initiatives.
- Ensure all voter engagement efforts are nonpartisan, inclusive, and accessible, with materials and outreach designed to reach diverse populations and remove barriers to participation.
- Create opportunities for community involvement and leadership by engaging participants, volunteers, or members in planning and supporting voter registration drives and civic engagement activities.
- Evaluate and strengthen efforts over time by tracking participation, soliciting feedback, and using data to improve outreach and impact.

# VOTER REGISTRATION ELIGIBILITY & SUBMISSION DEADLINES

## ELIGIBILITY

Registering to vote is a legal requirement to vote in elections in Iowa.

**To qualify to register to vote in the state of Iowa, you must be:**

- At least 17 years old.
- A United States citizen.
- An Iowa resident.

You cannot:

- Be a convicted felon (unless your voting rights have been restored by the Governor, including through Executive Order).
- Be adjudged mentally incompetent to vote by a court of law.
- Claim the right to vote in any other place.

## REGISTRATION SUBMISSION TIMELINES

### Iowa Code 48A.24

A person who accepts a completed voter registration form from an applicant shall submit the form to the appropriate County Auditor within seven days of receiving the form.

Notwithstanding the deadline above, a person who accepts a completed voter registration form from an applicant within three days of the voter registration deadline for the next election shall submit the form to the appropriate County Auditor within twenty-four hours of accepting the form, and not later than the registration deadline.

2026							OCTOBER				
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT					
							1	2	3		
4	5	6	7	8	9	10					
11	12	13	14	15	16	17					
18	19	20	21	22	23	24					
25	26	27	28	29	30	31					

If a voter registration form is accepted on Friday, October 16, it must be submitted to the appropriate County Auditor by Monday, October 19 for the pre-registration deadline.

# IOWA VOTER REGISTRATION OPTIONS

To register to vote in the state of Iowa, three different options are available, each designed to make the process accessible and convenient. The first two options will be discussed in greater detail below and on the following pages.

- **Online Voter Registration:** A fast and convenient way to register using a computer or mobile device. Requires a valid Iowa driver's license or non-operator ID.
- **Physical Voter Registration Form:** A paper form that can be completed and submitted by mail or delivered in person to the local County Auditor. Ideal for individuals who prefer a non-digital option.
- **Election Day Voter Registration:** Allows eligible voters to register at their polling place on Election Day. Appropriate identification and proof of residence must be in hand to complete the process.

## OUT-OF-STATE VOTER REGISTRATION OPTION

Individuals who have a primary residence in a different state, such as college students, are able to use the National Mail Voter Registration Form to register to vote. More details about this option will be provided on the following pages.

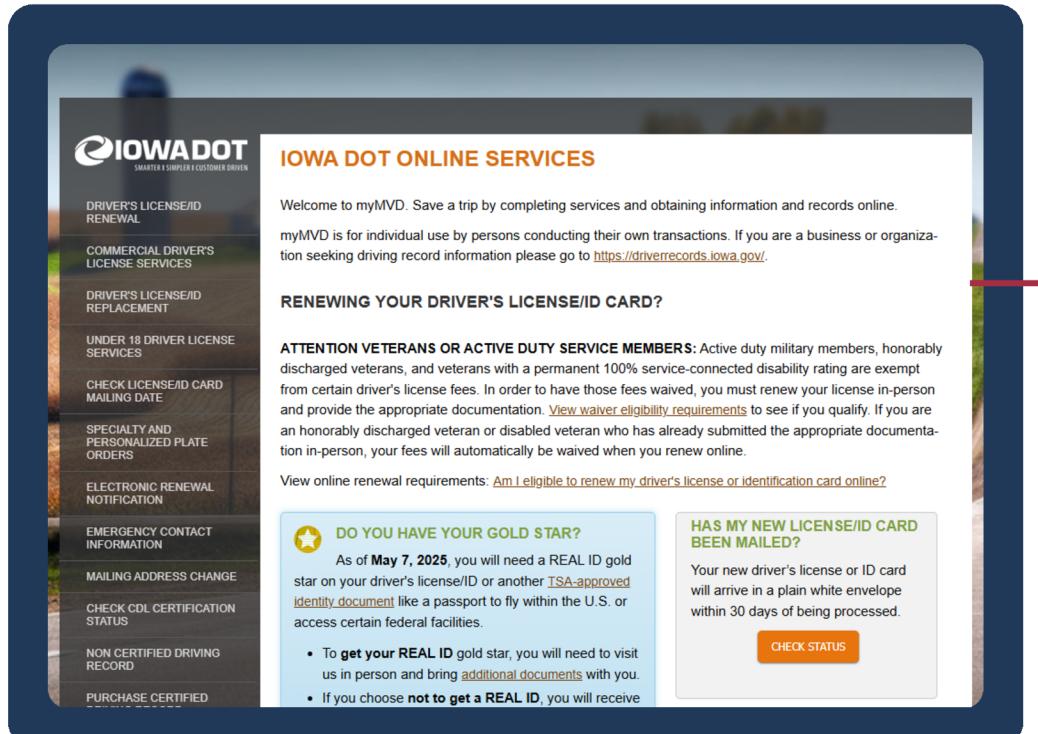
## REGISTERING TO VOTE AS A COLLEGE STUDENT

College students may choose to register to vote at their home address or at their post-secondary institution college address. They cannot register to vote at both.

# IOWA ONLINE VOTER REGISTRATION

The only available option to register to vote online is through the Iowa Department of Transportation website at **mymvd.iowadot.gov**. Individuals choosing this method MUST have their Iowa driver's license or non-operator ID readily available to complete the digital process. When prompted to login, individuals are to enter all required information accurately. The system will automatically determine eligibility based on the responses on the qualifications page.

Upon successful completion of all steps, registrants should receive a confirmation message indicating the submission has been accepted.



This is the screen users will see when accessing the website. To begin the voter registration process, they must log in by providing their legal name, Iowa driver's license or ID number, date of birth, and the last five digits of their Social Security number.

# IOWA PHYSICAL VOTER REGISTRATION FORM

The Iowa Secretary of State's Office houses the official voter registration form for the State of Iowa. These forms are available for download at [sos.iowa.gov](http://sos.iowa.gov). Individuals completing the paper registration will need one of the following identification methods:

- Iowa driver's license number
- Non-operator ID number
- Last four digits of their Social Security number if they do not have an Iowa state ID

Once all physical voter registration forms have been compiled after a voter registration drive, be sure to mail the forms to the local County Auditor within 7 days. Email [cattaward@sos.iowa.gov](mailto:cattaward@sos.iowa.gov) to request a prepaid shipping label if needed and indicate which counties are needed to be mailed to.

Registrants MUST check yes for both boxes to register to vote in Iowa. Iowa Law allows 17-year-olds to legally register to vote.

ID Number is a required section. One of the options MUST be filled out.

DOB and sex are required sections, phone and email are optional.

This section must only be completed if the individual receives mail somewhere other than their residential address.

If this section is left blank, the individual will be assigned *No Party*. To vote in a primary, political affiliation is required. *No Party* registrants can update their status later if they do wish to participate in a primary.

This MUST be signed and dated.

# NATIONAL MAIL VOTER REGISTRATION

The National Mail Voter Registration Form can be used to register U.S. citizens to vote, update registration information due to a change of name, make a change of address, or to register with a political party. Individuals **MUST** follow the state-specific instructions listed for their state.

After filling out this form, registrants must sign their name where indicated and send it to the state or local election office for processing.

**Voter Registration Application**  
Before completing this form, review the General, Application, and State specific instructions.

Are you a citizen of the United States of America?  Yes  No  
Will you be 18 years old on or before election day?  Yes  No  
If you checked "No" in response to either of these questions, do not complete form.  
(Please see state-specific instructions for rules regarding eligibility to register prior to age 18.)

This space for office use only.

1	Mr. <input type="checkbox"/> Miss <input type="checkbox"/> Mrs. <input type="checkbox"/> Ms. <input type="checkbox"/> Mrs. <input type="checkbox"/> Ms.	Last Name	First Name	Middle Name(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> Jr. <input type="checkbox"/> II <input type="checkbox"/> III <input type="checkbox"/> Sr. <input type="checkbox"/> IV
2	Home Address	Apt. or Lot #	City/Town	State	Zip Code
3	Address Where You Get Your Mail If Different From Above		City/Town	State	Zip Code
4	Date of Birth Month Day Year	5 Telephone Number (optional)	ID Number - (see item 6 in the instructions for your state)		
7	Choice of Party (see item 7 in the instructions for your state)	8 Race or Ethnic Group (see item 8 in the instructions for your state)	6		
9	I have reviewed my state's instructions and I swear/affirm that: ■ I am a United States citizen ■ I meet the eligibility requirements of my state and subscribe to any oath required. ■ The information I have provided is true to the best of my knowledge under penalty of perjury. If I have provided false information, I may be fined, imprisoned, or (if not a U.S. citizen) deported from or refused entry to the United States.				
Please sign full name (or put mark) ▲ Date: <input type="checkbox"/> / <input type="checkbox"/> / <input type="checkbox"/> Month Day Year					
If you are registering to vote for the first time: please refer to the application instructions for information on submitting copies of valid identification documents with this form.					
<b>Please fill out the sections below if they apply to you.</b>					
If this application is for a change of name, what was your name before you changed it?					
A	Mr. <input type="checkbox"/> Miss <input type="checkbox"/> Mrs. <input type="checkbox"/> Ms.	Last Name	First Name	Middle Name(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> Jr. <input type="checkbox"/> II <input type="checkbox"/> III <input type="checkbox"/> Sr. <input type="checkbox"/> IV
If you were registered before but this is the first time you are registering from the address in Box 2, what was your address where you were registered before?					
B	Street (or route and box number)	Apt. or Lot #	City/Town/County	State	Zip Code
If you live in a rural area but do not have a street number, or if you have no address, please show on the map where you live.					
C	Example Route 12 Public School ● X	NORTH ↑ ● Grocery Store Woodchuck Road			
If the applicant is unable to sign, who helped the applicant fill out this application? Give name, address and phone number (phone number optional)					
D					
<b>Mail this application to the address provided for your State.</b>					

Any U.S. citizen residing in 46 states and the District of Columbia (all states except New Hampshire, North Dakota, Wisconsin, and Wyoming may use this form) can fill out and mail this form. New Hampshire accepts the form only as a request for their own absentee voter mail-in registration form. Wisconsin accepts the form only as a request for their own absentee voter mail-in registration form or for the purposes of directing a person to their online voter registration system.

All highlighted sections **MUST** be filled out as they are required sections for each state. For the remaining numbered sections, please refer to the guidelines specific to the state that the individual is registering for. For the lettered sections, individuals may fill it out if it applies to them.

# BEFORE YOUR VOTER REGISTRATION DRIVE

## Develop an Action Plan

- Determine whether Wi-Fi will be available and identify the location, date, and time of your voter registration drive. Ensure that you obtain any necessary permissions or approvals to set up a registration station.

## Establish Clear Goals

- Define the purpose of your drive. What outcomes do you hope to achieve (e.g., number of registrations, community reach)?

## Build Your Team

- Identify members of your voter registration team. Determine who will assist with the event and how many volunteers are required to operate it effectively.

## Prepare Required Materials

- Each voter registration drive may vary, but consider preparing the following materials as needed:
  - Devices for online registration (phones, tablets, or computers with chargers)
  - Access to the online voter registration website
  - Tables and chairs
  - Sign-in sheets and pens
  - Promotional materials (e.g., posters, banners, signs)
  - Physical voter registration forms, if applicable.

## Promote the Event

- Publicize your voter registration drive using your existing networks and communication platforms. Utilize social media, flyers, announcements, and word-of-mouth to maximize outreach.

## Train Your Team

- Provide training for all volunteers, either during a designated training session or immediately prior to the event. Ensure team members are knowledgeable, confident, and prepared to assist participants effectively.

# VOTER REGISTRATION DRIVE TEAM TRAINING TIPS

Below are several key actions to help initiate an effective training session for your voter registration drive:

- **Introductions**

- Begin with brief introductions to help participants become acquainted, especially if they have not previously worked together. Consider asking each individual to share their reason for participating in the voter registration drive, fostering motivation and a shared sense of purpose.

- **Distribute Materials**

- Provide all participants with the necessary voter registration materials and allow time for review to ensure familiarity and understanding.

- **Explain the Voter Registration Process**

- Instruct volunteers on how to engage potential registrants. A standard opening question may include:
  - “Are you registered to vote?”
  - “Have you moved recently or changed your name since the last time you registered?”

- **Address Common Follow-Up Questions**

- Prepare volunteers to respond to frequently asked questions, such as:
  - “Am I eligible to register to vote?”
  - “When and where will I be able to vote?”
  - “How can I check the status of my registration?”

- **Explain How to Conclude the Registration Process**

- Ensure volunteers know how to professionally close each interaction. Example closing statements include:
  - “Thank you for registering to vote today.”
  - “If you have additional questions, you can contact the Secretary of State or your local County Auditor for more information.”
  - “Be sure to watch for a confirmation notice regarding your registration.”

- **Conduct a Demonstration**

- Facilitate role-playing exercises in which volunteers practice registering one another to vote and review frequently asked questions outlined in the guide.

- **Final Encouragement**

- Reinforce confidence by reminding volunteers that they are well-prepared to succeed.

# DURING YOUR VOTER REGISTRATION DRIVE

## **Set Up Your Registration Location**

- Establish your voter registration station in a visible, accessible, and high-traffic location. Ensure the space is welcoming, organized, and compliant with any site-specific requirements.

## **Utilize Social Media for Outreach**

- Document your event by taking photos and short videos to promote participation and visibility. Be mindful to protect privacy at all times – avoid capturing sensitive information such as identification documents, personal data, or completed voter registration forms.

## **Be Proactive and Engage the Public**

- Encourage volunteers to remain active and approachable by standing, making eye contact, and initiating respectful conversations.

## **Encourage Civic Engagement**

- Remind participants that voter registration is one important step in broader civic participation. Examples include:
  - “Registering to vote helps ensure your voice is heard.”
  - “Staying informed and participating in elections is a key part of civic engagement.”

## **Handle Voter Registration Forms Securely**

- All voter registration forms contain sensitive personal information and must be handled with care. Forms should never be shared, photographed, or left unattended.
- If using paper registration forms, a best practice is to store completed forms in a secure location until they are properly submitted.

## **Seek Guidance When Needed**

- If questions arise regarding voter eligibility, registration procedures, or form handling, consult a trusted source. Volunteers should be directed to contact the Iowa Secretary of State’s Office or the appropriate local County Auditor for accurate information.

# AFTER YOUR VOTER REGISTRATION DRIVE

## **Thank Your Volunteers**

- Express sincere appreciation to all volunteers for their time, energy, and commitment. Acknowledge their contributions individually or as a group to reinforce the value of their efforts.

## **Recognize the Impact**

- Regardless of the number of registrations completed, emphasize the significance of the work accomplished. Each interaction contributes to strengthening civic participation and expanding access to the democratic process.

## **Secure and Submit Registration Forms**

- Ensure that all completed voter registration forms are securely handled and submitted promptly. We recommend that all paper forms be turned in to the appropriate local County Auditor within 72 hours of the event, however Iowa Code 48A.24 allows for up to 7 days.

## **Document Outcomes**

- Record key details from the drive, such as the number of volunteers, estimated registrations, location, and any challenges or successes. This information will be valuable for reporting, evaluation, and future planning.

## **Gather Feedback**

- Invite volunteers to share feedback on what worked well and what could be improved. This can be done informally during the debrief or through a brief follow-up survey.

## **Plan Your Next Voter Registration Drive**

- Use the lessons learned to begin planning your next event. Identify potential improvements, new locations, or expanded outreach strategies to continue building momentum.

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## **Why should I register to vote?**

- Registering to vote is a required step to participate in elections. Without registering, you cannot cast a ballot. Registration ensures that you are eligible to vote and that you receive the correct ballot for your location.

## **Why should I vote?**

- Voting is one of the most direct ways to participate in our democracy. Elections determine leadership and policies at the local, state, and national levels. Voting allows you to have a voice in decisions that affect your community, schools, infrastructure, and future.

## **Which address should I use when registering?**

- You should use the address where you currently live and intend to vote. This ensures you are assigned to the correct voting precinct and receive the appropriate ballot.

## **Does my vote actually count?**

- Yes. Every vote matters. Many elections are decided by a small number of votes, especially at the local level. Voting ensures your voice is included in the decision-making process.

## **Can I register to vote using a P.O. Box?**

- No. A voter registration application requires a physical residential address. A P.O. Box may be used for mailing purposes but not as your residence.

## **My address has changed – do I need to update my registration?**

- Yes. If you move, you must update your voter registration with your new address. Different addresses correspond to different precincts, candidates, and ballot questions.

## **Where do I vote?**

- Your polling place is determined by your residential address. Your County Auditor's office provides polling location information, typically available online. Visit **voterready.iowa.gov** to find your polling place.

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## **Am I eligible to register to vote?**

- You are eligible to register to vote in Iowa if you are a U.S. citizen, an Iowa resident, and at least 17 years old. (17-year-olds can vote in Primary Elections if they will be 18 years old by the General Election Day, and you must be 18 years old to vote in a General Election). You also cannot be currently adjudged mentally incompetent to vote or have voting rights revoked due to a felony conviction without restoration.

## **Can I check my voter registration status?**

- Yes. In Iowa, you can check your voter registration status online through the Iowa Secretary of State's website or by contacting your County Auditor.

## **What if I make a mistake on my registration form?**

- If you notice an error, complete a new voter registration form with the correct information as soon as possible or contact your local County Auditor for guidance.

## **Do I have to choose a political party when registering?**

- No. In Iowa, choosing a political party is optional when you register. However, you must be registered with a party if you want to vote in that party's Primary Election.

## **Is my voter registration information private?**

- Some voter registration information in Iowa is public, such as your name and party affiliation. However, personal details like your Social Security number or driver's license number are kept private and protected by law.

## **Who can help if I have more questions?**

- If you have more questions about voting in Iowa, you can contact the Iowa Secretary of State's Office or your local County Auditor, who oversees elections in your county.

## **What voting accommodations are available for voters with disabilities in Iowa?**

- In Iowa, polling places are required to be accessible, and each location has at least one voting machine designed for voters with disabilities. These machines may include features such as audio ballots, large text, or touchscreen options. If a voter cannot enter the polling place, curbside voting is available, allowing election officials to bring a ballot to the voter's vehicle. Iowa also offers absentee voting by mail, which allows eligible voters to vote from home. If you have any more questions about voting with disabilities in Iowa, please visit [sos.iowa.gov/voters/elections-accessibility](http://sos.iowa.gov/voters/elections-accessibility).

# IOWA'S ELECTIONS ARE SECURE.

## YOUR VOTE SHAPES GOVERNMENT

Regardless of the outcome of any election, elected officials pay close attention to voter participation. The number of votes cast helps lawmakers understand the priorities and concerns of their constituents.

## AMERICANS HAVE FOUGHT FOR THE RIGHT TO VOTE

The right to vote was secured through the dedication and sacrifice of our nation's founders and generations of Americans who fought to expand and protect this fundamental freedom. Honoring their efforts means exercising this important civic responsibility.

## STRONGER PARTICIPATION STRENGTHENS DEMOCRACY

A higher level of voter participation leads to a more representative democracy. When more citizens vote, government is better equipped to reflect the will of the people and serve the public effectively.



# ARE YOU VOTER READY?

# VOTERREADY.IOWA.GOV

## UPCOMING ELECTION DATES

Primary Election Day

June 2, 2026

General Election Day

November 3, 2026



PREPARED BY THE IOWA  
SECRETARY OF STATE'S OFFICE