

Guide to Voter Registration

Registering voters is the first step in promoting the vote. Non-partisan organizations like NCJW can easily undertake this important activity without jeopardizing our tax-exempt status. Each new voter registered strengthens our democracy. You can plan elaborate voter registration drives or events or simply make registration forms available at section meetings and events.

With the recent development of the National Mail-In Voter Registration Form, registering voters has become a more standardized and somewhat easier process on the national level; however, it is extremely important that the form be filled out accurately according to the specific rules of your state. Pay particular attention to deadlines—only a handful of states allow same-day voter registration. In the majority of states, you must register to vote between 10 and 30 days before the date of an election.

The National Mail-In Voter Registration Form

- ▶ Download the National Mail-In Voter Registration Form from the US Election Assistance Commission's website: www.eac.gov/voter/. All states (except New Hampshire, Wyoming, and North Dakota) permit the use of this standard form as a valid means of voter registration
- ▶ Make sure to read the instructions carefully, particularly the state-specific instructions located in the downloadable application packet. Each state's specific registration policies vary, as in the examples below:
 - ▶ **Item 6 – ID Number:** Every state requires some form of ID, but the specific requirements vary as follows:
 - States requiring a full Social Security Number (SSN): AL, DE, GA, HI, KY, NM, OH, SC, TN, VA
 - States requiring the last four digits of SSN: KS, MO
 - States requiring the last four digits of SSN and driver's license number: CO, OK, UT
 - States requiring driver's license number or state ID: AZ, AR, CA, CT, DC, FL, ID, IL, IN, IA, LA, MA, ME, MD, MI, MN, MS, MT, NE, NJ, NY, NC, OR, PA, RI, SD, TX, VT, WA, WV, WI
 - ▶ **Item 7 – Choice of Party:** In many states, you must register with a party in order to vote in that party's primary election, caucus, or convention
 - States that do not require advance party registration in order to vote in primaries: AL, AK, AZ, CA, GA, HI, ID, IL, IN, IA, MA, MI, MN, MS, MO, MT, NJ, OH, SC, TN, TX, UT, VT, VA, WA, WI
 - ▶ **Item 8 – Race or Ethnic Group:** Few states require this information, and it can never be used to deny registration
 - States that require or request this information: AL, FL, GA, LA, SC, TN

- ▶ **Item 9 – Signature:** Before you submit a voter registration form, you must swear/affirm to certain facts, which vary widely from state to state. *Note: You must contact your state or local officials to find out the rules in your state. They will also be able to give you the mailing address for this form
- ▶ **Proof of Identification:** If you are registering to vote for the first time in your jurisdiction and are mailing this registration application, you may be required to provide proof of identification the first time you vote
 - The list of acceptable documentation includes: a copy of a current and valid piece of photo identification or a copy of a current utility bill, bank statement, government check, paycheck, or other government document that shows your name and address in the jurisdiction

Resources for State-Specific Information

Several organizations devote time and resources to monitoring specific state requirements and deadlines for voter registration. Please visit any of the following websites for reliable information on individual state policy

- ▶ **Declare Yourself:** A national non-partisan, non-profit campaign to empower and encourage every eligible 18-year-old to register and vote in the presidential primaries and 2008 presidential election.
www.declareyourself.com/voting_faqs/state_by_state_info_2.html
- ▶ **Rock the Vote:** A non-profit, non-partisan organization, founded in 1990 in response to a wave of attacks on freedom of speech and artistic expression.
www.rockthevote.com/2008-presidential-primary-caucus-calendar.php
- ▶ **Project Vote Smart:** A non-partisan, non-profit organization that brings citizens of all backgrounds together to defend democracy.
http://www.votesmart.org/voter_registration_resources.php
- ▶ **Your State's Board of Elections:** See the enclosed list of the website and contact information for every state's Board of Elections