

Know Your Rights

Your vote is your voice, and your voice matters.

WHO CAN REGISTER AND VOTE

Can I register to vote?

You can register and vote in Michigan if:

- You are a U.S. citizen
- You have been a resident of a city or township in Michigan for at least 30 days (or will be by Election Day)
- You are at least 17.5 years old and will be 18 years old by Election Day
- You are not currently serving a sentence in jail or prison

What if I'm a student?

Students from Michigan who attend school in Michigan can register to vote at their school or home address. Students from Michigan who attend school outside of Michigan can still register to vote at their home address in Michigan. Students who are not from Michigan but attend school in Michigan can register to vote at their school address in Michigan. For questions about registering to vote in other states, check out resources on voting in that state.

If you have a Michigan driver's license or state ID card, and you are registered to vote in Michigan, your voter registration address and the address on your ID will be the same. If you change the address on one, it will automatically change the other. The Secretary of State will mail you a sticker with your new address to place on your license or ID card.

What if I'm in jail or was convicted of a crime?

The only time you cannot register and vote is when you are serving a sentence in jail or prison.

You can register and vote if:

- You are in jail but have not been sentenced
- You are serving a sentence but are not in jail or prison
- You are on probation or parole but are not in jail or prison
- You served your sentence and are no longer in jail or prison

What if I'm homeless?

If you don't have a home, you can register to vote using a street corner, park, shelter or any other place where you usually stay as your address. The address can be a local shelter, advocacy organization, outreach center, or the home of someone who will accept mail for you.

HOW TO REGISTER TO VOTE

You can register to vote at any time!

You must be registered to vote in order to vote in Michigan. You can register at any time up until 8 p.m. on Election Day, but it is better to register as soon as possible. The earlier you register, the more choices you will have for how to register.

Am I registered to vote?

Visit the Michigan Voter Information Center michigan.gov/vote and enter the required information to see if you are registered to vote where you currently live. You can also call your city, township, or county clerk's office and ask if you are registered to vote where you currently live.

How do I register to vote for an upcoming election?

Prior to the 14th day before an election, you have many ways to register to vote:

- Online at michigan.gov/voterregistration (if you have a valid Michigan driver's license or state ID)
- At a Secretary of State branch office
- At your city or township clerk's office or your county clerk's office
- At any state agency that provides public assistance or services to people with disabilities
- By mailing in a completed voter registration application postmarked no later than the fifteenth day before the election
- Through a voter registration drive

Beginning on the 14th day before an election and through 8 p.m. on Election Day, you have one way to register to vote:

- Visit your city or township clerk's office and provide "proof of residency."

What is "proof of residency"?

"Proof of residency" is a document with your name and current address in the city or township where you live.

Paper or electronic copies of any of the following documents will work:

- A Michigan driver's license or state ID card
- A utility bill
- A bank statement
- A paycheck
- A government check
- Any other government document

Where is my city or township clerk's office, and when is it open?

Visit the Michigan Voter Information Center michigan.gov/vote and enter your address to find the information for your city or township clerk. If your city or township clerk operates a satellite office or offices, the hours and locations of those offices will be posted as well. Alternatively, you can call your city or township clerk's office and ask for their hours and location(s).

City and township clerks' offices must be open during their normal hours, for at least eight hours the weekend before each election, and from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Election Day.

Do I need a photo ID or proof of citizenship to register to vote?

No. You will be asked for a photo ID if you register to vote in person. If you don't have one or don't have one with you, you can sign a simple form and then register to vote. If you register to vote through the mail, and you have a Michigan driver's license or state ID card or a social security number, enter those numbers on your voter registration application where indicated.

VOTING BEFORE ELECTION DAY

You can vote before Election Day!

In all elections, registered voters in Michigan can vote before Election Day using an "absentee ballot." You don't need an excuse or a reason. You can vote before Election Day by absentee ballot from home or by visiting your city or township clerk's office.

With the passage of Proposal 2 of 2022, registered voters will also be able to vote in some elections at an "early voting site" using a regular ballot. Additional information on early voting will be coming soon.

How do I vote FROM HOME before Election Day?

Step 1: Request Your Ballot

Complete an application for an absentee ballot, sign it using your official signature, and submit it to your city or township clerk. You can submit your completed application by email, mail, fax, or in person. You can track when your application is received by your clerk and when your ballot is mailed to you by going to the Michigan Voter Information Center michigan.gov/vote and entering the required information.

Starting in 2023, registered voters will be able to submit a single request to have an absentee ballot sent to them for all future elections. Additional information on this process will be coming soon.

Step 2: Fill Out Your Ballot

Look for your absentee ballot to arrive in the mail. Once it arrives, fill it out, place it in the envelope provided, and sign the outside of the envelope with your official signature.

Step 3: Turn in Your Ballot

You should submit your completed ballot as soon as possible. In most cases, your completed ballot must be received by your city or township clerk by 8 p.m. on Election Day to count. However, if you are serving the military or living overseas, your completed ballot must be postmarked by Election Day and received by your city or township clerk within six days after the election.

You have many ways to submit your completed ballot:

- By mail (we recommend putting your ballot in the mail no later than two weeks prior to Election Day)
- By dropping it off at your city or township clerk's office or in a secure drop box provided by your clerk
- By having an immediate family member (including a grandparent, grandchild, or in-law) or a person residing in your household drop it off for you
- If none of the above options are possible, by having your city or township clerk pick up your completed ballot. To use this option, your completed ballot must be within the city or township where you vote, and you must call your city or township clerk by 5 p.m. on the Friday before Election Day to request that your ballot be picked up.

What if I'm on the permanent absentee voter list?

Even if you're on the "permanent absentee voter list," you still need to request a ballot for each election.

If you're signed up to be on the permanent absentee voter list, your city or township clerk will send you an absentee ballot **application** before each election.

To receive your absentee ballot by mail, you must submit your completed application to your city or township clerk.

Where can I get an application for an absentee ballot?

At least 75 days prior to each election, you can print and submit an application for an absentee ballot from the Michigan Voter Information Center michigan.gov/vote. Alternatively, you can call your city or township clerk and ask that an application be mailed to you. You may also use any application for an absentee ballot provided to you by the Secretary of State, your clerk, a political party or another organization.

If you have a current Michigan driver's license or state ID, you can complete your application online at michigan.gov/vote.

What is the deadline to vote FROM HOME before Election Day?

Submit your application as soon as possible. We strongly recommend submitting your application at least a month before the election to give ample time to receive your ballot, complete it, and return it to your city or township clerk.

In most cases, your completed ballot must be received by your city or township clerk by 8 p.m. on Election Day to count. However, if you are serving the military or living overseas, your completed ballot must be postmarked by Election Day and received by your city or township clerk within six days after the election.

How do I vote IN PERSON before Election Day using an ABSENTEE BALLOT?

Step 1: Go to your city or township clerk's office.

Step 2: Complete an application for an absentee ballot and submit it to the staff.

Step 3: Complete your ballot, place it in the envelope provided, sign the outside of the envelope with your official signature, and submit it to the staff.

When can I vote IN PERSON using an ABSENTEE BALLOT before Election Day?

You can go to your city or township clerk's office starting 40 days before Election Day to vote in person using an absentee ballot. If you are already registered to vote where you live, the deadline to vote IN PERSON before Election Day using an absentee ballot is the Monday before Election Day at 4 p.m. If you need to register to vote, the deadline to register and vote at your city or township clerk's office using an absentee ballot is 8 p.m. on Election Day.

Where is my city or township clerk's office and when is it open?

Visit the Michigan Voter Information Center michigan.gov/vote and enter your address to find the information for your city or township clerk. If your city or township clerk operates a satellite office or offices, the hours and locations of those offices will be posted as well. Alternatively, you can call your city or township clerk's office and ask for their hours and location(s).

City and township clerks' offices must be open during their normal hours, for at least eight hours the weekend before each election, and from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Election Day.

Is my clerk's office accessible?

You have the right to an accessible voting location and an accessible voting machine. If your clerk's office is not accessible or there is no accessible voting machine, call your city or township clerk right away, report it, and ask for an alternate site. You can also call the nonpartisan Election Protection Hotline (866-OUR-VOTE) to report the issue.

How do I vote IN PERSON before Election Day using a REGULAR BALLOT?

With the passage of Proposal 2 of 2022, registered voters will be able to vote in some elections at an "early voting site" using a regular ballot. Additional information on early voting will be coming soon.

VOTING ON ELECTION DAY

When is Election Day?

Learn more about upcoming elections in your community by going to the Michigan Voter Information Center michigan.gov/vote and entering the required information. Alternatively, you can call your city or township clerk's office and ask for this information.

When are the polls open?

Polls are open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. local time on Election Day. You have the right to vote if you are in line by 8 p.m.

What will be on the ballot?

You can view your sample ballot at the Michigan Voter Information Center michigan.gov/vote.

Where do I vote on Election Day?

If you are already registered to vote where you live, you must vote at your assigned polling place. You can find your polling place:

- Online at the Michigan Voter Information Center michigan.gov/vote by entering the required information
- On your Voter Identification Card
- By calling your city or township clerk
- By calling the nonpartisan Election Protection Hotline (866-OUR-VOTE)

If you are not registered to vote where you live, you must visit your city or township clerk's office with proof of residency by 8 p.m. on Election Day to register to vote. Once you are registered, you can vote by absentee ballot in the clerk's office or go to your polling place, if there is time to do so.

What if I've moved?

Update your voter registration whenever you move. If you did not update your registration, you can register to vote at your city or township clerk's office with proof of residency until 8 p.m. on Election Day.

You can also vote at your old polling place one last time if:

- You moved within the same city or township
- You moved to a different city or township after the 60th day before an election.

Can I get time off from work to vote?

Your employer isn't required to give you paid or unpaid time off to vote. Ask if they have a policy that allows you to take time off. If not, vote before Election Day.

VOTING ACCESSIBILITY

What if my polling place is not accessible?

You have the right to an accessible polling place and an accessible voting machine. If it is before Election Day, call your city or township clerk right away and ask for an assignment to an alternate site that is accessible. You can also call the nonpartisan Election Protection Hotline (866-OUR-VOTE) to report the issue.

If it is Election Day, send someone into the polling place to request curbside voting on your behalf. The poll workers at your polling place will bring a ballot outside so you can vote.

Can I get a ballot in my language?

If you vote in Clyde Township, Covert Township, or the City of Fennville, you have the right to a ballot and election materials in Spanish.

If you vote in the City of Hamtramck, you have the right to a ballot and election materials in Bengali.

If you do not read or write English, and a ballot is not available in your language, you have the right to assistance from anyone you choose. However, the person cannot be your employer, an agent of your employer or an officer or agent of your labor union.

What if I need assistance voting?

You have the right to vote independently using an accessible voting machine. If you would like to use an accessible voting machine, tell an election official when you arrive to vote.

You have the right to assistance from the election officials. You can ask the election officials for instructions on how to use the voting equipment or for assistance at any time, even after you've entered the voting booth.

If you are blind, disabled, or unable to read or write, you have the right to assistance from anyone you choose. However, the person cannot be your employer, an agent of your employer or an officer or agent of your labor union.

IDENTIFICATION FOR VOTING

Do I need a photo ID to vote?

No. But if you have it, bring it with you and provide it to the poll worker to make the process go faster.

You will be asked for photo ID when you go vote. If you do not have photo ID or do not have it with you, you can sign a simple form and vote.

Do I need a photo ID to vote if this is my first time voting in Michigan?

No. However, a small number of first-time voters who registered through the mail or a voter registration drive may need to provide some documentation to vote. Electronic or paper copies of any of the following will work:

A photo ID with your name and picture (regardless of the address or if it has an address):

- Driver's license or personal ID card from any state
- High school or college ID
- Passport
- Military or government-issued photo ID
- Tribal ID card

A non-photo ID with your name and address on it:

- Current utility bill
- Bank statement
- Paycheck stub
- Government check
- Any other government document

Do I need the receipt I received when I registered to vote?

Maybe. If you have it, bring it with you. If you registered to vote close to Election Day, you may need it.

Do I need my Voter Identification Card to vote?

No. But if you have it, bring it with you.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Where is my absentee ballot?

You can track your absentee ballot and application at the Michigan Voter Information Center michigan.gov/vote by entering the required information. Visit the site to see the date that:

- Your application was received and processed by your clerk
- Your absentee ballot was mailed to you
- Your absentee ballot was received by your clerk

If there is no date under a particular field, it means that step is not yet complete.

What if I received my absentee ballot but then made an error on it or it was lost or destroyed?

If it is before Election Day, call or visit your city or township clerk's office as soon as possible to cancel your first absentee ballot and request a new one. If it is Election Day, go to your polling place, fill out a form and vote. If you still have the first absentee ballot, because you made an error or it was only partially destroyed, take it with you.

What if I registered to vote, but I'm not on the voter list at my polling place?

If you have the receipt that you received when you registered to vote, show that receipt to the poll worker in order to vote. If you don't have your receipt, give the poll worker your address and ask if you're at the correct polling place. If you registered to vote but are not at the right polling place for your address, go to the correct polling place.

You can always go to your city or township clerk's office with proof of residency and register to vote before 8 p.m. on Election Day. While there, you can vote by absentee ballot.

If you cannot go to your clerk's office with proof of residency, you may be able to cast a "provisional ballot." To do this, you'll have to swear you believe you previously registered to vote.

If you can provide a photo ID that shows your current address, and if you are at the correct polling place, your provisional ballot will go into the voting machine and will be counted on Election Day. If not, it will go into an envelope, and the clerk will review it after Election Day. You have six days after Election Day to go to the clerk's office with any documentation to show that you are registered to vote.

What if I go to the wrong polling place?

Go to the correct polling place by looking it up online: go to the Michigan Voter Information Center www.michigan.gov/vote and enter the required information. Alternatively, you can call your city or township clerk and ask for your correct polling place before you go vote.

If you arrive at the wrong polling place, ask a poll worker to help you find your correct polling place. If you aren't registered to vote where you currently live, go to your city or township clerk's office with proof of residency before 8 p.m. on Election Day to register to vote.

What if I have a problem voting or someone is trying to intimidate or harass me?

Tell a poll worker immediately. If the poll worker is the problem, or they don't address the problem, call your city or township clerk. If the city or township clerk doesn't address the problem, call the nonpartisan Election Protection Hotline (866-OUR-VOTE).

What if someone challenges my right to vote?

Step 1: Ask to be sworn in by the poll worker

Step 2: Answer whatever questions are necessary to establish your eligibility to vote

Step 3: Vote.

What should I do if I requested an absentee ballot but never received it?

Call or visit your city or township clerk's office as soon as possible to cancel your first absentee ballot and request a new one. The deadline to do this is the Monday before Election Day at 4 p.m. Or you can go to your polling place on Election Day, complete a simple form, and vote.

What if I received my absentee ballot, but I don't have enough time to mail it back to my clerk?

In most cases, your completed ballot must be received by your city or township clerk by 8 p.m. on Election Day to count. However, if you are serving the military or living overseas, your completed ballot must be postmarked by Election Day and received by your city or township clerk within six days after the election.

Beginning two weeks before Election Day, unless you are serving in the military or living overseas, you should drop your completed absentee ballot off at your city or township clerk's office or a secure drop box provided by the clerk, rather than mailing it. If you can't drop it off, you can ask an immediate family member (including a grandparent, grandchild, or in-law) or a person living in your household to drop it off for you.

If these options are not possible for you, you can ask your city or township clerk to pick up your completed ballot. To use this option, your completed ballot must be within the city or township where you vote, and you must call your city or township clerk by 5 p.m. on the Friday before Election to request that your ballot be picked up.

What if I have my absentee ballot but decide to vote in person on Election Day?

If you decide not to vote by absentee ballot, take your absentee ballot to your polling place on Election Day and surrender it. You will then be issued a new ballot that you can vote in the polling location.

What if I mailed my absentee ballot to my city or township clerk, but I'm concerned it won't arrive in time?

Track your absentee ballot by entering the required information at the Michigan Voter Information Center michigan.gov/vote.

In most cases, your completed ballot must be received by your city or township clerk by 8 p.m. on Election Day to count.

If there is no date listed under the “received” field, and it is before Election Day, visit your city or township clerk’s office, ask to spoil your original absentee ballot, and vote a new one. The deadline to do this at your clerk’s office is the Monday before Election Day at 4 p.m.

If there is no date listed under the “received” field, and it is Election Day, go to your polling location, and let the poll workers know. If your city or township clerk has not yet received your absentee ballot, you can fill out a form, and vote a new ballot.

What if I make a mistake on my ballot or the voting machine malfunctions?

If you make a mistake, ask for a new ballot right away. You have the right to a new ballot if you catch the mistake before your ballot is inserted into the voting machine and counted.

If the voting machine rejects your ballot, ask for a new one. You have the right to start over.

If the voting machine isn’t working, you can place your completed ballot into a bin in the voting machine. The poll workers will insert your ballot into the voting machine once the machine is working again.