

ELECTION DAY
Primary Election - September 9th
General Election - November 4th

Voting is an important part of being a U. S. citizen. The people who are elected this year will make decisions about things that directly affect your life, like your taxes, the education of your children and/or grandchildren, and changes in the laws of our state and nation. Voting is your chance to choose the decision makers and tell them what you want. In NYS, before you can vote you need to register.

TO VOTE, YOU MUST:

- be a United States citizen
- be 18 years old by the date of the general, primary or other election in which you want to vote
- live at your present address at least 30 days before an election
- not be in jail or on parole for a felony conviction, and
- not claim the right to vote elsewhere.

HOW TO REGISTER

You can register (sign up) to vote by mail or in person. You must fill out a new Voter Registration form if you move to a new address, change your name, or want to change your political party; otherwise your registration is permanent. If you change your party, the change will not be in effect until after the next general election.

REGISTRATION BY MAIL

Voter Registration forms are available on the New York State Board of Elections website (www.elections.state.ny.us), at your county board of elections office, town and city halls, post office, library, political parties, state offices, many social service agencies, and the League of Women Voters. To be able to vote in the Primary Election (September 9, 2008), your Voter Registration form must be postmarked no later than August 15th and received by the board of elections no later than August 20th. To be able to vote in the November 4, 2008 General Election your Voter Registration form must be postmarked no later than October 10th and received by the board of elections no later than October 15th.

REGISTRATION IN PERSON

You may register at your local board of elections or any state agency participating in the National Voter Registration Act, on any business day throughout the year. To be eligible to vote on in the Primary Election on September 9th, your in-person application must be received no later than August 15th. To be eligible to vote on in the General Election on November 4th, your in-person application must be received no later than October 10th. If you have been honorably discharged from the military or became a naturalized citizen since October 10th, you may register in person to vote at the Board of Elections up until October 24th.

WHAT IF YOU MOVE?

If you are already registered, your change of address must be received by the Board of Elections by August 20th to vote in the Primary Election, or by October 15th to vote in the General Election. If you move within your county and cannot notify your board of elections, you can go to the polling place for your new address and vote by affidavit ballot (which is a paper ballot). The ballot will be sent to the board of elections to verify the new address. If verified, the vote will be counted and the change of address will be made a part of their records.

HOW DO I MAKE SURE I AM REGISTERED TO VOTE?

New York State has complied with federal law in establishing a centralized data base of identifying information for all registered voters. This information is used to create the rolls of registered voters used at the polling places. Like all new computer systems, its data is gradually improving, but there can be some problems, and your name could be erroneously eliminated from the rolls. Here's how you can protect your right to vote.

All registered voters should watch their mail for a card from the NYS Board of Elections with the location of their polling place. If you do not receive such a card before the primary date, Sept. 9th, call your local Board of Elections to inquire about your status. You are not considered registered to vote unless the Board of Elections has evaluated your registration status as “Active”. To check your status, call your local county Board of Elections and ask three questions:

1. Am I registered to vote?
2. Is my registration status set to “Active”? If not, to what is it set?
3. Will my name appear in the polling place roll book on Election Day?

While you can check your registration information on the NYS Board of Elections website, the information that you see does not indicate your status and is not assurance that you will be on the rolls.

WHAT IF I DON'T KNOW WHERE TO VOTE?

Most boards of elections in New York State send a postcard telling you the location of your polling place. If you do not receive this postcard, call your county board of elections to verify your registration and the location of your polling place. You can also check the Voter Registration Search engine on the NYS Board of Elections website at: <https://voterlookup.elections.state.ny.us/votersearch.aspx>, or you can call the League of Women Voters of New York State at 518-465-4162 or toll free 1-866-598-6971.

WHAT IF I AM GOING TO BE OUT OF TOWN OR IN THE HOSPITAL ON ELECTION DAY?

If you will be away from your county on Election Day or will be unable to go to your polling place because of illness or disability, you can ask your county board of elections for an Absentee Ballot Application or download one from the New York State Board of Elections website. To receive an Absentee Ballot to vote in the Primary Election, your Application must be postmarked by September 2nd or you must apply in person by September 8th. If mailed, the actual ballot must be postmarked by September 8th or hand delivered by September 9th. To receive an Absentee Ballot to vote in the General Election, your Application must be postmarked by October 28th or you must apply in person by November 3rd. If mailed, the actual ballot it must be postmarked by November 3rd or hand delivered by November 4th.

ABSENTEE VOTING FOR MILITARY VOTERS

To receive an Absentee Ballot to vote in the *Primary Election*, your Application must be received by the Board of Elections by August 15th if you are not already registered to vote, or by September 2nd if you are already registered to vote. You may also apply in person until September 8th if you are previously registered to vote. To receive an Absentee Ballot to vote in the *General Election*, your Application must be received by the Board of Elections by October 24th if you are not already registered to vote, or by October 28th if you are already registered to vote. You may also apply in person until November 3rd if you are previously registered to vote.

HOW DO I VOTE WHILE I AM IN COLLEGE?

When you are attending college at a school outside your hometown, you may vote in person or by absentee ballot in your home community. You must be registered in your hometown district to vote there.

Many states allow college students to register and vote where they attend college as the Census Bureau considers college students to be residents of their college communities. Check with the town or city clerk or the county Board of Elections in your college community to find out if you may vote from your college address.

CAN I GET TIME OFF FROM WORK TO VOTE?

NYS Law states that if you do not have sufficient time outside your working hours to vote, you may take off up to 2 hours at the beginning or the end of your shift, with pay, to allow you time to vote. You must notify your employer no more than 10 and not less than 2 days before the day of the election that you will take that time.

AT YOUR POLLING PLACE

A sample ballot should be posted. If you do not know how to use the voting machine, ask one of the election inspectors for assistance. If you are not on the rolls at your polling place, and believe you are registered to vote, ask for an “affidavit” (paper) ballot (to which you are legally entitled), and ask the poll worker for advisement about following up on your status. After validation by your county board of elections, your affidavit/paper ballot will be counted. Be sure to bring some identification.

WHAT IS AN AFFIDAVIT BALLOT?

An Affidavit ballot, sometimes referred to as a Provisional ballot or paper ballot, is used when a voter's name has been omitted from the computer generated pollbook. These voters must swear that they are registered voters and provide current and previous addresses. At a primary election, a voter must include the party in which he/she is enrolled. A voter may also use an affidavit ballot to challenge his/her party enrollment stated in the pollbook.

WHO WILL I BE VOTING FOR IN THE 2008 ELECTION?

In the Primary (September 9, 2008) and the General Election (November 4, 2008), voters in New York State will be asked to vote for candidates for United States President and Vice President, United States Representative in Congress, NYS Senate and NYS Assembly members, and judges of various courts. You may also be voting on statewide and/or local ballot proposals.

WHAT IDENTIFICATION DO I NEED TO VOTE?

Federal law requires persons who register by mail for the first time to provide identification. Identification means a current NYS driver's license or the last four digits of your Social Security number. If you do not have a current NYS driver's license, you need to provide the last four digits of your social security number. If you do not have either of these, you may provide a copy of a valid photo ID, or a current utility bill, bank statement, government check or some other government documentation that shows your name and address. If you do not provide identification when you register, you will be asked for it the first time you vote.

THE VOTING MACHINE

For the fall 2008 elections, as part of New York State's implementation of the Help America Vote Act (HAVA), there will be at least one ballot marking device per polling place which will be accessible to individuals with disabilities.

These devices enable individuals with disabilities, who cannot use a lever machine or mark a paper ballot, to create a marked paper ballot for casting their vote. This is accomplished through the following interfaces, features and accessories that assist voters in the independent voting process:

- For voters who cannot see or read the ballot text, an audio interface recites the ballot, including all contests and candidates, and allows the voter to make selections. It also verifies selections by reciting them back to the voter.
- For voters with some form of visual impairment or illiterate voters, a key pad with Braille enables the voter to navigate through the ballot and record their vote.
- For voters who are unable to use a pen, or who are quadriplegic or paraplegic, a “sip and puff” device allows them to navigate the ballot and make their selections.
- For voters with limited manual dexterity, accessible “paddles”, access pads, foot pads and buttons allow them to navigate the ballot and make selections.

These interfaces and features, and multi-language capability, are common to the two brands of Ballot Marking Devices (BMDs) that New York counties have chosen. New York City, Erie, Rockland, Schenectady and Albany counties have chosen the AutoMark device, and all other counties have chosen the ImageCast device. The devices will be used to assist voters in marking their ballots only; the actual reading and counting of these ballots, for this election, will be done centrally in a manner determined by each county's Board of Elections.

While these new machines are geared to disabled voters for this election, New York is required to replace the old lever voting machines by fall 2009 for all voters. The devices used just for marking ballots for disabled voters this year might well be the devices all voters use next year. It is most likely that the votes will actually be tallied next year at the polling place by scanning the ballots with optical scanning equipment.

Here is the process that a person voting on the new voting machines will follow at their polling place:

- The voter will check in at the registration desk and obtain a paper ballot.
- The voter will take the ballot to the ballot marking device, and will use the device to record their vote on the ballot.
- The voter will take the completed ballot to a secure deposit location to be counted later by the Board of Elections.

COUNTDOWN TO ELECTION DAY

PRIMARY ELECTION—TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 2008

When two or more candidates from a political party seek election for the same office, voters registered in that party vote in a primary election to choose the candidate who will represent that party in the general election.

- Last day to register for primary election by mail: Postmarked by *August 15th*, received by *August 20th*
- Last day to register for primary election in person: *August 15th*
- Last day to postmark application for absentee ballot for primary election: *September 2nd*
- Last day to apply in person for an absentee ballot for primary election: *September 8th*
- Last day to postmark and return the actual absentee ballot and date it must be received by the board of elections: Postmarked by *September 8th*, received by *September 16th*
- Last day to deliver absentee ballot in person to the county board of elections: *September 9th*

GENERAL ELECTION—TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 4TH

- Last day to register for general election by mail: Postmarked by *October 10th*, received by *October 15th*
- Last day to register for general election in person: *October 10th*
- In-person registration for persons honorably discharged from the military or who become naturalized citizens after October 10th: *October 24th*
- Last day to postmark application for absentee ballot for general election: Postmarked by *October 28th*
- Last day to apply in person for an absentee ballot for general election: *November 3rd*
- Last day to postmark and return the actual absentee ballot and date it must be received by the board of elections: Postmarked by *November 3rd*, received by *November 11th*
- Last day to deliver an absentee ballot in person to your county board of elections: November 4th

PRIMARY ELECTION – TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 9TH

Polls are open on Primary Day from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. at the following localities: New York City and the counties of Nassau, Suffolk, Westchester, Rockland, Orange, Putnam and Erie,

In all other counties in New York State, polls are open on Primary Day from
12 noon to 9 p.m.

GENERAL ELECTION – TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 4TH

Polls are open 6 a.m. – 9 p.m.