



# Frequently Asked Questions

## When Doing Voter Registration at Nonprofits

The FAQ is meant to support nonprofit staff and volunteers who may be fielding questions from folks they are attempting to register and vote. The FAQ can be used in training materials and be kept at voter registration tables or on hand when staff and volunteers are talking to potential voters. To learn more about the requirements for hosting a voter registration drive, visit *Fair Elections Center's drive guides*: [fairelectionscenter.org/voter-registration-drive-guides](https://fairelectionscenter.org/voter-registration-drive-guides)

### Common Questions from First Time or New Potential Voters

For first time voters or those new to the process, they may have a lot of questions about the basics of registering to vote and the voting process itself. That's why the National Association of Secretaries of State has put together [canivote.org](https://canivote.org). The site is easy to navigate for staff, volunteers and the voters themselves. Below are common responses but voters can be referred to [canivote.org](https://canivote.org) for state-specific details.

#### How can I check my voter registration?

*Most every state has a voter registration look-up tool online.* It generally requires you to provide your birth date or other identifying information.

#### What ID do I need to vote?

Congratulations! They're ready to register, but your job isn't done yet

#### If they are already registered to vote

*Many states have voter ID laws of which half require a photo ID.* The majority of photo ID states allow voters without the right ID to vote a provisional ballot or sign an affidavit and vote a regular ballot. Remember, most every state asks for some form of ID from first time voters who vote on Election Day at the polls.

#### How do I find my polling place or information about early, absentee, or mail voting?

Most states have polling place look up tools. In some states you have to contact your local elections office directly.

Other common questions (and quick responses staff or volunteers can use) from first time or new potential voters, staff or volunteers may be asked:

- *How do I update my voter registration if I moved recently?* – They can fill out another form with staff or volunteers or go to their online state elections tool through [canivote.org](https://canivote.org)
- *Do I need to be a US Citizen to register to vote?* – Yes, but there are very few cities where non-citizens can vote locally.
- *Do I need to be 18 to register to vote?* – Not in all states! Some allow you to preregister at 16 and others allow 17-year olds to vote in primaries if they'll be 18 by the general election. They can look up their state's information with their online state elections tool.
- *How do I receive my ballot by mail?* – It differs by state. Information can be found through [canivote.org](https://canivote.org)
- *Do I have to register for a specific party?* – It is not required, but may affect their ability to vote in a primary depending on what state they're in.



# Frequently Asked Questions

## When Doing Voter Registration at Nonprofits

### Circumstantial Questions from Potential Voters

States vary greatly on regulations around registering to vote for formerly-incarcerated individuals, folks experience homeless, and in other circumstances. This can make the voter registration process confusing, and it is critical for staff and volunteers to understand how to give potential voters the right resources, and (if possible) their state's voter registration laws.

#### **If I have a felony, can I still register and vote?**

*The answer is both "yes" and "It depends".* Every state is different. Very few states have no restrictions. Some states restore your right to vote immediately upon release from jail or prison. Many others only restore the right after have serving a "full sentence" – including probation and parole. See [campaignlegal.org/restoreyourvote](http://campaignlegal.org/restoreyourvote) for more information.

#### **If I am homeless, can I still register and vote?**

*The short answer is yes.* We recommend using the address of a shelter or other nonprofit for their registration and mailing address. In most states, a person can also mark a cross street on the form to indicate the place where they usually sleep. See [nationalhomeless.org/campaigns/voting/](http://nationalhomeless.org/campaigns/voting/)

#### **If I am a survivor of domestic violence, can I keep my voter registration address private?**

*In most states, yes. Address Confidentiality Programs and Confidential Voter Listings are programs administered by the state* that enable survivors of domestic violence to register while maintaining the confidentiality of their address. The National Network to End Domestic Violence provides a list of currently available programs by state: [nedv.org/resources-library/state-state-chart-address-voter-protection-programs/](http://nedv.org/resources-library/state-state-chart-address-voter-protection-programs/)

*Other circumstantial questions you may receive from potential voters, staff or volunteers should be prepared to answer:*

- *If I have a disability, will my polling location be able to respond to my needs?* ([www.aapd.com/advocacy/voting/](http://www.aapd.com/advocacy/voting/))
- *If I am out of the country during the election, will I still be able to vote?* ([www.fvap.gov/citizen-voter](http://www.fvap.gov/citizen-voter))
- *Can I request assistance in filling out my voter registration form or marking my ballot -*  
*The short answer is yes.* ([www.aapd.com/advocacy/voting/](http://www.aapd.com/advocacy/voting/))
- *How do I update my registration if I have changed my name?* – They can fill out a new voter registration form with staff and volunteers and not that it is because of a name change.

Remember that regardless of how much staff or volunteers prepare, there may be questions they are unable to answer. If there is a question they cannot answer, they can offer to look it up and ask for the potential voter's contact information to follow up with the information in the next few days.