

CONDUCTING A VOTER REGISTRATION DRIVE IN IOWA

 Fair Elections Center

 Nonprofit VOTE

VOTER REGISTRATION DEADLINES

- Iowa allows Election Day registration at the polls.
- Applications for registration before Election Day must be postmarked by 15 days before Election Day or received by 5 p.m. 15 days before Election Day.
- Registration drives must return completed forms within 7 days of receipt; if received within 3 days of an election, they must submit them within 24 hours.

GETTING STARTED

Training Requirement: Iowa does not require training for registration drives, but the Iowa Secretary of State's website provides guidelines for soliciting voter registration and absentee requests:

sos.iowa.gov/elections/candidates/solicitforms.html

Notification and Registration Requirements: Iowa does not have notification requirements for registration drives.

Compensation Restrictions: Iowa law allows voter registration organizations to pay their employees, but only for their employees' time. Do not pay registration drive participants based on how many registrations they complete. Do not offer an applicant any incentive of monetary value to register to vote. Paying, offering to pay, or receiving compensation based on the number of registration forms completed, or the party affiliations shown on completed forms, or on any other performance criteria, is illegal. This does not apply to political committees.

OBTAINING APPLICATIONS

State Form: The state mail-in voter registration application can be downloaded at the Secretary of State's website: sos.iowa.gov/elections/pdf/voteapp.pdf

Groups should contact their county auditor for forms at cost: sos.iowa.gov/elections/auditors/auditorslist.html

Federal Form: The federal mail-in voter registration application may be used in voter registration drives and may be obtained from the state commissioner of elections: eac.gov/voters/national-mail-voter-registration-form/

Photocopying Blank Forms: Blank applications may be photocopied and used in voter registration drives.

HANDLING APPLICATIONS

Incomplete Applications: A person assisting another in completing a voter registration form may not complete any portion of the form without the knowledge or consent of the registrant.

Photocopying Completed Applications: There is no law or rule prohibiting photocopying or retaining information from completed registration applications. As a best practice, a voter's date of birth, full or partial Social Security number and/or driver's license number should not be retained.

Submitting Completed Applications: Groups who collect forms on behalf of a political party, nonparty political organization, candidate or committee must submit collected registration forms to the appropriate county auditor within seven days of receiving the form, and if they collect a completed voter registration form from an applicant within three days of the voter registration deadline, they must submit the form to the appropriate commissioner within 24 hours of receiving the form, and not later than the registration deadline. Otherwise, completed voter registration applications should be postmarked or submitted no later than the 15th day before the election to the appropriate county auditor. Applications can also be delivered or mailed to Elections Division; Office of the Secretary of State; Lucas Building 1st Floor; 321 E. 12th Street; Des Moines, IA 50319.

Fair Elections Center and its Campus Vote Project intend the information contained herein to be used only as a general guide. This document should not be used as a substitute for consultation with a licensed Iowa legal professional.

Last updated May 2026



Find more information on voting in Iowa:
bit.ly/fecivote