

Teen Voter Guide

*As **YOUTH** we have a unique voice when it comes to political issues. Let your voice be heard! Learn how to share your voice!
Register to vote!*

Who can vote in Texas?

To be eligible to register to vote in Texas, a person must be:

- A United States citizen;
- A resident of the Texas county in which application for registration is made;
- At least 18 years old on Election Day;
- Not finally convicted of a felony, or, if so convicted must have (1) fully discharged the sentence, including any term of incarceration, parole, or supervision, or completed a period of probation ordered by any court; or (2) been pardoned or otherwise released from the resulting disability to vote; and
- Not determined by a final judgment of a court exercising probate jurisdiction to be (1) totally mentally incapacitated; or (2) partially mentally incapacitated without the right to vote.

How do you register?

Registering to vote is easy in Texas. It doesn't even require a stamp! Official applications to register to vote are postage-paid by the State of Texas.

In most Texas counties, the County Tax Assessor-Collector is also the County Voter Registrar. In some counties, the County Clerk or County Elections Administrator registers voters. You may obtain an application from the County Voter Registrar's office, the Secretary of State's Office, libraries, many post offices, or high schools. From our website, you may request that we send you an official, postage-paid application. Or, you may download an informal application, but you will be required to affix a stamp before mailing. You may also register to vote when you apply for or renew your driver's license.

Read the instructions on the form, fill it out and mail it postage-free to the County Voter Registrar, or hand-deliver it to the County Voter Registrar's office.

You must be at least 17 years and 10 months of age on the date you apply. If for any reason you cannot register yourself, with your permission, your spouse, parent or child may fill out and sign an application for you if that person is a registered voter or has applied for voter registration. This person is known as your "agent."

The application must be received in the County Voter Registrar's office or postmarked 30 days before an election in order for you to be eligible to vote in that election. You will

receive a voter registration certificate in the mail after the County Voter Registrar has processed your voter registration application. Upon receipt of the voter registration certificate, sign it, fold it and keep it in your wallet and take it to the polls with you when you vote.

All voters who registered to vote in Texas must provide a Texas driver's license number or personal identification number issued by the Texas Department of Public Safety or the last four digits of your social security number. If you have not been issued any of these numbers, then you must state that fact on the application by checking the designated box.

What if I don't have a driver's license, personal identification number, OR a social security number? Can I still register to vote in Texas?

A voter who has not been issued a driver's license or social security number may register to vote, but such voter must submit proof of identification when presenting himself/herself for voting or with his/her mail-in ballots, if voting by mail. These voters' names are flagged on the official voter registration list with the annotation of "ID." The "ID" notation instructs the poll worker to request a proper form of identification from these voters when they present themselves for voting. Acceptable identification includes:

- a driver's license or personal identification card issued to the person by the Department of Public Safety or a similar document issued to the person by an agency of another state, regardless of whether the license or card has expired;
- a form of identification containing the person's photograph that establishes the person's identity;
- a birth certificate or other document confirming birth that is admissible in a court of law and establishes the person's identity;
- United States citizenship papers issued to the person;
- a United States passport issued to the person;
- official mail addressed to the person by name from a governmental entity;
- a copy of a current utility bill, bank statement, government check, paycheck, or other government document that shows the name and address of the voter; or
- any other form of identification prescribed by the Secretary of State.

Voter registration certificate

- Once you apply, a voter registration certificate (proof of registration) will be mailed to you within 30 days.
- Check your certificate to be sure all information is correct. (If there is a mistake, make corrections and return it to the voter registrar immediately.)
- When you go to the polls to vote, present your certificate as proof of registration.
- You may vote without your certificate by signing an affidavit at the polling place and showing some other form of identification (for example, driver's license, birth certificate, copy of electric bill).
- If you lose your certificate, notify your County Voter Registrar in writing to receive a new one.

- You will automatically receive a new certificate every two years, if you haven't moved from the address at which you are registered.

If you move within the county

If you move within the same county simply go to the Secretary of State's web site and change your address online or promptly notify the County Voter Registrar, in writing, of your new address by:

- correcting your current voter registration certificate on the back and returning it to the County Voter Registrar;
- filling out a new voter registration application form and checking the "change" box; or
- making simultaneous changes to your driver's license and voter registration when you apply for or update your driver's license.

You will receive a new certificate with your new address. You will be able to vote in your new precinct 30 days after your change of address is submitted. If you miss the deadline (30 days before an election), you may vote in your former precinct as long as you still reside in the political subdivision conducting the election.

Your residence is located in a specific "precinct," which is an area within the county. There are many precincts within a county. The place where you will vote on Election Day is located in your precinct. There may be combined precincts in order to accommodate joint local elections; therefore, in some elections you may vote outside your designated precinct. The County Clerk or County Elections Administrator can give you the specific location of your polling place, or you can check on-line to see if the County Clerk or Elections Administrator has that information posted. The Secretary of State's Office may also provide polling place information at the "Where do I vote" link on its webpage prior to the primary, primary runoff and November uniform election date elections.

If you move to another county

You must re-register! Fill out a new application and mail it, or take it in person, to the Voter Registrar of your new county. You may not register online if you move from one county to another. You will be registered 30 days after your application is submitted. You will receive a new certificate.

After changing residence to another county, a person may be eligible to vote a "limited" ballot in his/her new county of residence on candidates or issues common to the old and new counties. A "limited" ballot may be voted only during early voting by personal appearance or by mail (not on Election Day) if:

- the person would have been eligible to vote in the county of former residence on Election Day if still residing in that county;

- the person is registered to vote in the county of former residence at the time the person offers to vote in the county of new residence; and
- a voter registration for the person in the county of new residence is not effective on or before Election Day.

Name change

Promptly notify the County Voter Registrar, in writing, of the name change using the same steps as for IF YOU MOVE WITHIN THE COUNTY. You will receive a new certificate 30 days after your name change notice is submitted. You may continue to vote during this period. If you do not have your certificate in hand, you may sign an affidavit at the polls and present a form of identification.

Who is my County Voter Registrar?

A. Most often in Texas, your County Voter Registrar is the County Tax Assessor-Collector. However, if your County Commissioners Court has established the position of County Elections Administrator and a County Elections Administrator has been appointed, then the County Elections Administrator is the County Voter Registrar. A County Commissioners Court may also transfer the duties of voter registrar from the County Tax Assessor-Collector to the County Clerk; in this case, the County Clerk is your County Voter Registrar. If you call any of these officials or the County Courthouse (the numbers should be under your County's name in the telephone directory), you will be directed to your County Voter Registrar.

Where do I vote?

A. Polling places are usually listed in your local newspapers in the weeks before the election. Your County Clerk or County Elections Administrator and local political subdivisions (school districts, cities, water districts, etc.) may also have websites with a list of where polling places are located. Call your County Clerk, County Elections Administrator, or local political subdivision conducting the election in order to find your polling location. The Secretary of State's Office may also provide polling place information at the "Where do I vote" link on its webpage prior to the primary, primary runoff and November uniform election date elections.

How often do elections occur?

Elections occur every two years for municipal elections. State house elections occur every two years. The state senate is very four years. The United States House of Representatives election is every 2 years. The United States senate elections occur every 6 years. The presidential elections occur every 4 years.

When are Election days?

Elections days are the first Tuesday after the first Monday of November. Primaries are the first Tuesday after the first Monday of March.

What is "early voting?"

A. "Early voting" is a way to cast your ballot before Election Day either in person or by mail.

- **In person** - Call your County Clerk or County Elections Administrator or the local political subdivision conducting the election for early voting dates, hours and polling places.
- **By mail** - If you will be: (1) out of the county during early voting and on Election Day; (2) age 65 or older; (3) sick or disabled; or (4) confined to jail, call the County Clerk, County Elections Administrator, or local political subdivision in charge of the particular election and ask him/her to send you an application for a ballot by mail. Or, you may request one from the Secretary of State's Office at 1.800.252.VOTE (8683), or [online](#).

Courtesy of: <http://www.sos.state.tx.us/elections/pamphlets/largepamp.shtml>