

Massachusetts

Registration Deadline

Forms must be received or postmarked 20 days before an election.¹

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Database Implementation Status

Massachusetts has had a top-down statewide voter registration system, in which municipal officials directly access a centralized state database, since the mid-1990s.²

Entering Voter Registration Information

Who inputs voter registration information? Municipal officials generally review and enter information from voter registration forms in their jurisdictions into the statewide system.³

What happens to voter registration forms submitted at state registration agencies? Forms received by a voter registration agency are sent within five calendar days to the appropriate municipal board of registrars.⁴ Forms received by the Registry of Motor Vehicles (“RMV”) will be sent electronically.⁵

How are most forms submitted? Massachusetts reported that in 2004, 59% of forms were submitted by mail, 39% were submitted in person to election officials, 1% were submitted at the RMV, and 2% were submitted at another voter registration agency.⁶

Voter Registration Form

The relevant portions of the voter registration form are included at the end of this section.⁷

Processing of Forms Without Identifying Numbers

How will the state treat an application with an affirmative indication that the applicant has no valid identifying number? The applicant will be assigned a unique voter registration number. If the applicant is otherwise eligible, she will be considered registered.

How will the state treat an application without an identifying number and without an affirmative indication that the applicant has no such number? If uncorrected (see below), the application will be rejected.⁸

How will the state treat an application listing an identifying number that is either incomplete or illegible? If uncorrected (see below), the application will be rejected.⁹

Matching Against Motor Vehicle and Social Security Records

What fields from the voter registration form will the state seek to match to motor vehicle or Social Security records? Identifying number, first initial, last name, and date of birth.

How precise is the match standard? Massachusetts intends to use an exact match standard, but has not yet finalized the criteria by which a match will be sought.

How much human intervention is involved in determining whether information is matched? The matching process will be fully automated.

Description of matching process: Massachusetts has not yet fully determined the process by which it will seek to match information on voter registration forms. The state currently contemplates that the system will automatically seek a match as information is entered by municipal officials. The system will seek to match certain fields exactly, and within a few seconds will return a response of “verified” or “not verified.”

Note: Each municipality will also match the addresses on voter registration forms with a municipal database of valid addresses. If the match fails, the municipality will cross-check the address against the town assessor’s office records. If a match still cannot be found, the application will be rejected.¹⁰

What are the consequences if the state cannot find a match? If the applicant is otherwise eligible, she will be registered, but if uncorrected (see below), she will have to show identification before voting or at the polls.

Notice and Opportunity to Resolve Errors

Does the applicant have the opportunity to correct a missing or incomplete identifying number, without submitting a new form? Yes. The applicant may correct missing or incomplete information within 20 days of notice that information was missing or incomplete.¹¹

Does the applicant have the opportunity to resolve a failed match, without submitting a new form? Yes. The applicant may submit information to resolve a failed match within 20 days of notice that the match failed.

If information on an otherwise timely application is corrected after the voter registration deadline, is the correction timely? Yes, if corrected within 20 days of the date of notification.¹²

Description of notice and correction process: An applicant whose identifying number is missing, incomplete, or illegible will be notified by mail, and the application will be rejected unless a corrected number is supplied within 20 days of the date of notification. An applicant whose identifying number is unverified will also be notified by mail; such applicants will be registered, but must then provide a copy of identification before voting (by mail or in person) or at the polls.

Identification Requirements at the Polls

Who must provide identification at the polls? A first-time voter registering by mail who has not yet submitted sufficient identification and whose identifying numbers have not been verified, and any voter labeled “inactive,” must present identification at the polls.¹³ All other voters may be asked by an election officer to present identification, and may be challenged under normal challenge procedures if they refuse.¹⁴

Forms of ID:

1st-time voters	current and valid photo ID
registering by mail	current utility bill w/ name, address
without verified	bank statement w/ name, address
identifying number:	government check w/ name, address
	paycheck w/ name, address
	other gov't document w/ name, address

What forms of identification are accepted? A current and valid photo ID, or a copy of a current utility bill, bank statement, government check, paycheck, or other government document that shows the voter’s name and address.¹⁵

What are the consequences of failing to show identification? The voter may cast a provisional ballot.¹⁶ The ballot will be counted if the municipal clerk determines that the voter was eligible to vote in the precinct.¹⁷ Voters who have registered in that precinct in the past and who affirm that they have continuously resided in the precinct will be deemed eligible, unless the clerk produces affirmative evidence of ineligibility.¹⁸

Statutes and Regulations

MASS. GEN. LAWS, ch. 51 generally concerns registration. MASS. GEN. LAWS, ch. 51, § 47C, directs the secretary of the commonwealth to establish and maintain a single statewide voter registration system. MASS. REGS. CODE tit. 950, chs. 57-58 comprise the applicable regulations.

End Notes

¹ MASS. GEN. LAWS., ch. 51, §§ 1F, 26; MASS. REGS. CODE tit. 950, §§ 57.04(4).

² electionline.org, *Assorted Rolls: Statewide Voter Registration Databases Under HAVA*, June 2005, available at <http://www.electionline.org/Portals/1/EB11.FINAL1.pdf>, at 19.

³ MASS. REGS. CODE tit. 950, §§ 58.03.

⁴ MASS. GEN. LAWS., ch. 51, §§ 36, 42G; MASS. REGS. CODE tit. 950, §§ 57.05(3).

⁵ MASS. REGS. CODE tit. 950, §§ 57.06(3).

⁶ Election Assistance Commission, *The Impact of the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 on the Administration of Elections for Federal Office 2003-2004*, June 30, 2005, tbl. 2, available at http://www.eac.gov/NVR_Spreadsheets/NVRA_table_2.html. Due to rounding, the percentages listed may exceed 100%.

⁷ The voter registration form that Massachusetts has made available online is the federal form.

⁸ MASS. GEN. LAWS., ch. 51, § 47; MASS. REGS. CODE tit. 950, §§ 57.04(3)(c)-(f).

⁹ MASS. GEN. LAWS, ch. 51, § 47; MASS. REGS. CODE tit. 950, §§ 57.04(3)(c)-(f).

¹⁰ MASS. REGS. CODE tit. 950, §§ 58.04(4).

¹¹ MASS. GEN. LAWS, ch. 51, § 47; MASS. REGS. CODE tit. 950, § 57.04(3)(f).

¹² MASS. REGS. CODE tit. 950, §§ 57.04(4)(e).

¹³ MASS. GEN. LAWS, ch. 54, § 76B.

¹⁴ *Id.* § 76B(a).

¹⁵ *Id.* § 76B(b)(2)(A).

¹⁶ *Id.* §§ 76B(b)(2)(B)(i), 76C.

¹⁷ *Id.* § 76C(d).

¹⁸ *Id.* § 76C(g).

General Instructions

Who Can Use this Application

If you are a U.S. citizen who lives or has an address within the United States, you can use the application in this booklet to:

- Register to vote in your State,
- Report a change of name to your voter registration office,
- Report a change of address to your voter registration office, or
- Register with a political party.

Exceptions

Please do not use this application if you live outside the United States and its territories and have no home (legal) address in this country, or if you are in the military stationed away from home. Use the Federal Postcard Application available to you from military bases, American embassies, or consular offices.

New Hampshire town and city clerks will accept this application only as a request for their own absentee voter mail-in registration form.

North Dakota does not have voter registration.

Wyoming law does not permit mail registration.

How to Find Out If You Are Eligible to Register to Vote in Your State

Each State has its own laws about who may register and vote. Check the information under your State in the State Instructions.

Note: All States require that you be a United States citizen by birth or naturalization to register to vote in federal and State elections. Federal law makes it illegal to falsely claim U.S. citizenship to register to vote in any federal, State, or local election.

Also Note: You **cannot** be registered to vote in more than one place at a time.

How to Fill Out this Application

Use both the Application Instructions and State Instructions to guide you in filling out the application.

First, read the Application Instructions. These instructions will give you important information that applies to everyone using this application.

Next, find your State under the State Instructions. Use these instructions to fill out Boxes 6, 7, and 8. Also refer to these instructions for information about voter eligibility and any oath required for Box 9.

When to Register to Vote

Each State has its own deadline for registering to vote. Check the deadline for your State on the last page of this booklet.

How to Submit Your Application

Mail your application to the address listed under your State in the State Instructions. Or, deliver the application in person to your local voter registration office.

The remaining States that accept the national form will accept copies of the application printed from the computer image on regular paper stock, signed by the applicant, and mailed in an envelope with the correct postage.

First Time Voters Who Register by Mail

If you are registering to vote for the first time in your jurisdiction and are mailing this registration application, you may be required to provide proof of identification the first time you vote.

Depending on the specific requirements of your State, you may avoid providing identification at the polls when you vote for the first time by mailing a copy of an identification document together with this application. The list of acceptable documents is included in the State Instructions.

Do not include original documents with this application.

Please read the accompanying State Instructions to determine the voter identification requirements for your State.

If You Were Given this Application in a State Agency or Public Office

If you have been given this application in a State agency or public office, it is your choice to use the application or not.

If you decide to use this application to register to vote, you can fill it out and leave it with the State agency or public office. The application will be submitted for you. Or, you can take it with you to mail to the address listed under your State in the State Instructions. You also may take it with you to deliver in person to your local voter registration office.

Note: The name and location of the State agency or public office where you received the application will remain confidential. It will not appear on your application. Also, if you decide not to use this application to register to vote, that decision will remain confidential. It will not affect the service you receive from the agency or office.

Application Instructions

Before filling out the body of the form, please answer the questions on the top of the form as to whether you are a United States citizen and whether you will be 18 years old on or before election day. If you answer no to either of these questions, you may not use this form to register to vote. However, state specific instructions may provide additional information on eligibility to register to vote prior to age 18.

Box 1 — Name

Put in this box your full name in this order — Last, First, Middle. Do not use nicknames or initials.

Note: If this application is for a change of name, please tell us in **Box A** (on the bottom half of the form) your full name before you changed it.

Box 2 — Home Address

Put in this box your home address (legal address). Do **not** put your mailing address here if it is different from your home address. Do **not** use a post office box or rural route without a box number. Refer to state-specific instructions for rules regarding use of route numbers.

Note: If you were registered before *but* this is the first time you are registering from the address in Box 2, please tell us in **Box B** (on the bottom half of the form) the address where you were registered before. Please give us as much of the address as you can remember.

Also Note: If you live in a rural area but do not have a street address, or if you have no address, please show where you live using the map in **Box C** (at the bottom of the form).

Box 3 — Mailing Address

If you get your mail at an address that is different from the address in Box 2, put your mailing address in this box.

Note: If you have no address in Box 2, you **must** write in Box 3 an address where you can be reached by mail.

Box 4 — Date of Birth

Put in this box your date of birth in this order — Month, Day, Year. *Be careful not to use today's date!*

Box 5 — Telephone Number

Most States ask for your telephone number in case there are questions about your application. However, you do **not** have to fill in this box.

Box 6 — ID Number

Federal law requires that states collect from each registrant an identification number. You must refer to your state's specific instructions for item 6 regarding information on what number is acceptable for your state. If you have neither a drivers license nor a social security number, please indicate this on the form and a number will be assigned to you by your state.

Box 7 — Choice of Party

In some States, you must register with a party if you want to take part in that party's primary election, caucus, or convention. To find out if your State requires this, see item 7 in the instructions under your State.

If you want to register with a party, print in the box the full name of the party of your choice.

If you do **not** want to register with a party, write "no party" or leave the box blank. Do **not** write in the word "independent" if you mean "no party," because this might be confused with the name of a political party in your State.

Note: If you do not register with a party, you can still vote in general elections and nonpartisan (nonparty) primary elections.

Box 8 — Race or Ethnic Group

A few States ask for your race or ethnic group, in order to administer the Federal Voting Rights Act. To find out if your State asks for this information, see item 8 in the instructions under your State. If so, put in Box 8 the choice that best describes you from the list below:

- American Indian or Alaskan Native
- Asian or Pacific Islander
- Black, *not of* Hispanic Origin
- Hispanic
- Multi-racial
- White, *not of* Hispanic Origin
- Other

Box 9 — Signature

Review the information in item 9 in the instructions under your State. Before you sign or make your mark, make sure that:

- (1) You meet your State's requirements, and
- (2) You understand **all** of Box 9.

Finally, sign your **full** name or make your mark, and print today's date in this order — Month, Day, Year.

If the applicant is unable to sign, put in **Box D** the name, address, and telephone number (optional) of the person who helped the applicant.

Voter Registration Application

Before completing this form, review the General, Application, and State specific instructions.

Are you a citizen of the United States of America? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Will you be 18 years old on or before election day? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If you checked "No" in response to either of these questions, do not complete form. (Please see state-specific instructions for rules regarding eligibility to register prior to age 18.)		This space for office use only.									
1	(Circle one) Mr. Mrs. Miss Ms.	Last Name	First Name	Middle Name(s)	(Circle one) Jr Sr II III IV						
2	Home Address		Apt. or Lot #	City/Town	State	Zip Code					
3	Address Where You Get Your Mail If Different From Above			City/Town	State	Zip Code					
4	Date of Birth ____/____/____ Month Day Year		5	Telephone Number (optional)		6 ID Number - (See Item 6 in the instructions for your state)					
7	Choice of Party (see item 7 in the instructions for your State)		8	Race or Ethnic Group (see item 8 in the instructions for your State)							
9 I have reviewed my state's instructions and I swear/affirm that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ I am a United States citizen ■ I meet the eligibility requirements of my state and subscribe to any oath required. ■ The information I have provided is true to the best of my knowledge under penalty of perjury. If I have provided false information, I may be fined, imprisoned, or (if not a U.S. citizen) deported from or refused entry to the United States. 											
Please sign full name (or put mark)											
Date: <table border="1" style="display: inline-table; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 20%; height: 20px;"> </td> <td style="width: 20%; height: 20px;"> </td> <td style="width: 20%; height: 20px;"> </td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center; font-size: small;">Month</td> <td style="text-align: center; font-size: small;">Day</td> <td style="text-align: center; font-size: small;">Year</td> </tr> </table>									Month	Day	Year
Month	Day	Year									

If you are registering to vote for the first time: please refer to the application instructions for information on submitting copies of valid identification documents with this form.

Please fill out the sections below if they apply to you.

If this application is for a **change of name**, what was your name before you changed it?

A	Mr. Mrs. Miss Ms.	Last Name	First Name	Middle Name(s)	(Circle one) Jr Sr II III IV
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If you were **registered before but this is the first time you are registering from the address in Box 2**, what was your address where you were registered before?

B	Street (or route and box number)	Apt. or Lot #	City/Town/County	State	Zip Code
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If you live in a rural area but do not have a street number, or if you have no address, please show on the map where you live.

Write in the names of the crossroads (or streets) nearest to where you live.
 Draw an **X** to show where you live.
 Use a dot to show any schools, churches, stores, or other landmarks near where you live, and write the name of the landmark.

C

Example	Route #2	
		● Grocery Store
		Woodchuck Road
Public School ●		X

NORTH ↑

If the applicant is unable to sign, who helped the applicant fill out this application? Give name, address and phone number (phone number optional).

D	
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Mail this application to the address provided for your State.

State Instructions

Maryland

Registration Deadline — 9:00 p.m. 21 days before the election.

6. ID Number. If you have a current, valid Maryland driver's license or a Motor Vehicle Administration identification card, you must enter the driver's license or identification number. If you do not have a current, valid Maryland driver's license or Motor Vehicle Administration identification card, you must enter at least the last 4 digits of your social security number. However, please note, the disclosure of your full Social Security number is voluntary. The statutory authority allowing election officials to request your full Social Security number is Election Law Article, Section 3-202, Annotated Code of Maryland. The number will be used only for registration and other administrative purposes. It will be kept confidential.

7. Choice of Party. You must register with a party if you want to take part in that party's primary election.

8. Race or Ethnic Group. Leave blank.

9. Signature. To register in Maryland you must:

- be a U.S. citizen
- be a Maryland resident
- be at least 18 years old by the next general election
- not be under guardianship for mental disability
- not have been convicted of buying or selling votes
- not have been convicted more than once of a crime of violence (Criminal Law, Art. 14-101)
- not have been convicted of an infamous crime [1] unless:
 - you have been pardoned,
 - you have completed the court-imposed sentence [2] (first conviction), or
 - at least 3 years have passed since you completed the court-imposed sentence [2] (second or later conviction).

[1] Infamous crime means any felony or any other crime involving an element of deceit, fraud or corruption.

[2] The court-imposed sentence includes probation, parole, community service, restitutions and fines.

Attention: Proof of Voter Identification

(Pursuant to the Help America Vote Act of 2002)

If you have never voted in Maryland and submit this application by mail, and if you want to ensure that you are not required to provide identification when you vote in Maryland for the first time, you should submit with this application:

- a **COPY** of a current valid photo identification, **OR**
- a **COPY** of a current utility bill, bank statement, government check, paycheck, or other government document with your name and address

If you do not provide proof of identification, you may cast a provisional ballot.

Mailing address:

State Board of Elections
P.O. Box 6486
Annapolis, MD 21401-0486

Massachusetts

Registration Deadline — 20 days before the election.

6. ID Number. Leave blank.

7. Choice of Party. If you do not designate a party of political designation in this box, you will be registered as unenrolled. Unenrolled voters may participate in party primaries. However, an unenrolled voter must enroll in a party on the day of the Presidential Preference Primary in order to participate in that primary.

8. Race or Ethnic Group. Leave blank.

9. Signature. To register in Massachusetts you must:

- be a citizen of the United States
- be a resident of Massachusetts
- be 18 years old on or before the next election
- not have been convicted of corrupt practices in respect to elections
- not be under guardianship with respect to voting
- not be currently incarcerated for a felony conviction

Attention: Proof of Voter Identification

(Pursuant to the Help America Vote Act of 2002)

If this form is submitted by mail and it is the first time you have regis-

tered to vote in your jurisdiction, you **MUST** submit current, valid proof of identification with this application or the first time you vote in a federal election. To send it with this application you should enclose one of the following:

- 1) A **COPY** of a current and valid photo identification **OR**
- 2) A **COPY** of a current utility bill, bank statement, government check, paycheck, or other government document that shows your name and address in the jurisdiction.

Submitting your proof of identification now with the application will allow you to avoid the federal requirement to show this proof at the polling place or, if voting by mail, to avoid sending it with your mail-in-ballot.

If you do not provide proof of identification, you may cast a provisional ballot.

Voters may also be required to show proof of identification under State law.

Mailing address:

Secretary of the Commonwealth
Elections Division, Room 1705
One Ashburton Place
Boston, MA 02108