

## HOW TO REGISTER TO VOTE IN TEXAS

### Who May Register to Vote in Texas?

Any United States citizen residing in Texas who:

- Is at least 18 years old on Election Day;
- Has not been finally convicted of a felony, or if a prior felon, has completed all punishment (including any term of incarceration, parole, supervision, or period of probation), or has received a pardon; and
- Has not been declared mentally incompetent by a court of law.

### How Do I Register to Vote?

- By mail – Get a registration form, fill it out, and mail it in. It is free.
- In person – Register at a voter registration agency.

### Where Can I Get A Registration Form to Mail In or Register To Vote in Person?

Registration forms look like postcards. They are available in many languages. They are available at the following places:

- All Department of Public Safety offices (where you go to get a driver's license);
- All county voter registrar offices (In most counties, the office is part of the county tax assessor- collector's office, but in some counties, it is part of the county clerk or elections administrator's office. You can ask the county courthouse for the office location.);
- The Secretary of State's Office (or call them at 1-800-252-8683);
- Public libraries;
- Many post offices;
- Many high schools;
- On the internet at: INK  
<http://www.sos.state.tx.us/elections/voter/reqvr.shtml>"<http://www.sos.state.tx.us/elections/voter/req vr.shtml>;
- Any office of Disability Rights Texas (call 1-800-252-9108 to find the nearest agency office);
- Any office of a state agency that provides public assistance (Department of Transportation, Texas Workforce Commission, Local Workforce Center - One Stop); and/or
- Any office that provides state-funded programs that help people with disabilities (Department of Aging and Disability Services, Department of State Health Services, Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services, etc.).

The offices that have the registration forms must also help you complete the forms, unless you refuse assistance. In addition, political parties, activists groups, and private citizens can give out application forms. If they do, they must help you register, too, whether or not you agree with their politics or point of view.

### **If I Am Registering by Mail, Do I Need to Send Anything Else Besides the Form?**

No, not unless this is the first time you have registered to vote. First-time voters must also send in a photocopy of identification along with their registration form. Acceptable ID includes: A driver's license; bank statement; utility bill; pay check; or other government document that shows your name and address.

**Note:** If you chose not to send in a copy of identification when registering to vote as a first time voter, you will be required to show identification at the polls when you go to vote for the first time.

### **What is the deadline to register to vote for an upcoming election?**

- You must register 30 days before an election to be eligible to vote in that election.
- If you are registering by mail, your application form must be postmarked at least 30 days before the election.

### **What If I Have a Disability and Can't Leave the House?**

- You can either register by mail, or
- If an agency is providing you with services in your home, and if they offer voter registration services, they must provide those voter registration services at your home.

### **What If I Am Staying in a Hospital or Other Institution That Is Not in My Home County?**

If you reside in an institution, or somewhere else that is not in the same county as your permanent address, you can register to vote by mail in the county where your permanent address is. Then you can vote at your current residence with a vote-by-mail ballot. (See handout on Alternative Voting Options.)

### **What If I Need Help to Register?**

Anyone of your choice can help you register. Anyone you choose may fill out the registration card for you, in your presence. If you cannot sign your name, you may have a "witness" sign on your behalf. If you can make a mark of any kind, do so, in the signature line. Have your "witness" sign and date their name under the signature line, to indicate that they acted as your witness.

### **Is There a Way to Find out If I Am Already Registered to Vote?**

You can call the Secretary of State's office at 1.800.252.8683: This is the same number you would call to request an application by mail or to seek answers to any voting related question.

## **What Happens After I Register?**

- Once you submit a voter registration application, a voter registration certificate (proof of registration) will be mailed to you within 30 days.
- Voter Registration Certificate - 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 you will need to present a valid photo ID. Acceptable forms of identification include a state-issued drivers license or ID card, a state-issued Election Identification certificate, concealed handgun license, U.S. military identification, U.S. citizenship certificate, U.S. passport, or a voter registration certificate reflecting a disability exemption.
- 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.

## **How Do I Make Changes to My Voter Registration Certificate?**

If you move within the same county, promptly notify the Voter Registrar, in writing, of your new address by:

- Correcting your current voter registration certificate on the back and returning it to the Voter Registrar;
- Filling out a new voter registration application form and checking the "change" box;
- Making simultaneous changes to your driver's license and voter registration when you apply for or update your driver's license;
- Go to: [www.texasonline.state.tx.us/NASApp/SOS/SOSACManager](http://www.texasonline.state.tx.us/NASApp/SOS/SOSACManager) to request to make changes to your name and/or address on your voter registration card; or
- Contact any of the designated voter registration offices.

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 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, or register in any way that is listed above. You will be registered 30 days after your application is submitted. You will receive a new certificate.

### **If you have a name change:**

- Promptly notify the Voter Registrar, in writing, of the change using the same steps as for HOW TO MAKE CHANGES TO A VOTER REGISTRATION CERTIFICATE.
- 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.

**For Further Information Contact:**

SECRETARY OF STATE  
P.O. Box 12060  
Austin, Texas 78711-2060  
(512) 463-5650 or 1-(800) 252-VOTE (8683)  
Fax: (512) 475-2811  
TTY: 7-1-1  
[www.sos.state.tx.us](http://www.sos.state.tx.us)

If you need assistance in registering to vote,  
have questions regarding voting,  
or feel that any of your voting rights have been violated  
please contact Disability Rights Texas at  
1-888-796-VOTE (8683) or email [info@disabilityrightstx.org](mailto:info@disabilityrightstx.org).

*Disability Rights Texas' goal is to make each handout understandable by and useful to the general public. If you have suggestions on how this handout can be improved, please contact Disability Rights Texas at the address and telephone number shown above or e-mail our agency at [info@disabilityrightstx.org](mailto:info@disabilityrightstx.org). Thank you for your assistance.*

*This handout is available in Braille and/or on audio tape upon request.*

*Disability Rights Texas strives to update its materials on an annual basis, and this handout is based upon the law at the time it was written. The law changes frequently and is subject to various interpretations by different courts. Future changes in the law may make some information in this handout inaccurate. The handout is not intended to and does not replace an attorney's advice or assistance based on your particular situation.*