

**Pennsylvania**

# VOTING GUIDE

*for new citizens*



Your rights and responsibilities

# introduction

As a new citizen of the United States and Pennsylvania, you have the right to vote. It is important to vote. Voting means electing responsible leaders and making your voice heard. You should vote in every election. Before you vote, you must register. You must register at least 30 days before the election. After you register once, you do not need to register again unless you move, change your name, or wish to change your political party.

This handbook will help you to:

- find out if you are eligible to vote
- fill out the voter registration form
- learn about voting in Pennsylvania.

Please contact the Department of State or your local elections official if you have questions, ideas, or concerns about registering to vote or voting. To contact the Department of State, call 1-717-787-5280 or visit [www.dos.state.pa.us](http://www.dos.state.pa.us) to find contact information for your local elections official.

Thank you for being part of Pennsylvania's future by casting your vote.

## *Special thanks to:*

- Regan Cooper, Pennsylvania Immigration and Citizenship Coalition
- Carol Rogoff Hallstrom, Esq., Department of Homeland Security/U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
- Elizabeth Hayden, Project SHINE, Temple University

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Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
Office of the Governor  
Harrisburg

May 2007

Congratulations on completing your journey to United States citizenship. It is important to continue this journey by taking part in an essential role of citizenship: voting. America was founded on the ideals of freedom. These ideals can continue only if citizens such as yourself take an active role in government. By selecting your leaders in local, state and federal government, you will influence the future of your hometown, your county and Pennsylvania.

As you begin this exciting new chapter in your life, I hope you will find this guide to elections helpful. It provides tips such as how to register to vote, and what it will be like when you vote for the first time at your local polling place.

Best of luck in your new role as an American citizen.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Edward G. Rendell". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly stylized font.

Edward G. Rendell  
Governor



Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
Secretary of the Commonwealth  
Harrisburg

May 2007

*¡Saludos!*

On behalf of the Pennsylvania Department of State, I congratulate you on becoming a United States citizen. Citizenship brings many exciting opportunities and important responsibilities.

This booklet will guide you through the process of voting, one of the most vital rights of your new citizenship. Please read through this guide before you register to vote, and before you vote for the first time. It contains many useful tips.

Let us work together in pursuit of our common goal to improve our government at the local, state and national levels. Your active participation in every election will make a difference.

With best wishes for success as an American citizen, I am

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Pedro A. Cortés". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Pedro A. Cortés  
Secretary

## *Benefits and Responsibilities of Citizenship*

### **The Principles of Our Government**

- ***The People Rule***

Americans elect people to represent them. The United States uses a “one person, one-vote” election system.

- ***Limited Government***

Basic freedoms are guaranteed to all citizens of the United States.

- ***Separation of Powers***

Each of the three branches of government acts independent from the others and may not interfere with another branch.

### **Responsibilities of Citizenship**

- Learning and obeying the laws of the country, including state and local laws.
- Learning about issues that are of concern or interest to you.
- Finding out about political parties and candidates.
- Voting in every election.
- Respecting the rights of others.

## Benefits of Citizenship

- The right to vote.
- The right to be represented at every level of government.
- The right to be treated fairly; to have the same rights and privileges as any other citizen.
- The right to own property, to speak and write freely, to worship, and to gather in groups without government interference.
- The right to be protected against violence, against discrimination, and against unfair financial practices.

## *Who is Eligible to Vote?*

Individuals applying to register to vote must be:

- **A citizen of the United States** for at least one month before the next election.
- **A resident of Pennsylvania** and the local district for at least 30 days before the next primary or election.
- **At least 18 years of age** on or before the day of the next primary or election.

### **IMPORTANT:**

***DO NOT REGISTER TO VOTE BEFORE YOUR CITIZENSHIP CEREMONY! If you register before you are a citizen, you could delay or ruin your chances to become a citizen.***

Convicted felons are not allowed to vote in Pennsylvania while they are in jail. After their release, they can become a registered voter. People who are serving time for a misdemeanor (lesser crime) or who are in jail while they wait for their trial can register to vote, and can vote by absentee ballot.

## *How to Register to Vote*

- 1. Register to vote in person** at a County Voter Registration Office or other designated sites. A list of these sites is included at the end of this guide.
- 2. Register to vote by mail** from the County Voter Registration Office or other designated sites. A list of these sites is included at the end of this guide.
- 3. Download a voter registration mail application form** at [www.votespa.com](http://www.votespa.com). Click Voter Registration in top left corner. Click Voter Registration Application Forms. Click Pennsylvania Voter Registration Mail Application form. Print it, fill it out, and send it to your County Registration Office.
- 4. Register Online.** Complete the Online Pennsylvania Voter Registration Application Form at <https://www.pavoterservices.state.pa.us/Pages/Login.aspx>. Print it out, sign it and send it to your County Registration Office.
- 5. Register to Vote at PennDOT.** After you already have become a U.S. citizen, you can register to vote when you obtain or renew your driver's license.

## *Instructions for Filling out the Pennsylvania Voter Registration Form*

Complete the entire form. This will help the County Voter Registration Office process your voter registration quickly. Some sections of the form must be filled out. These sections are marked below by the word "required." If you do not complete these sections, your voter registration will not be accepted.

### **Box 1. Qualifications for Voting - Required**

Check yes to confirm that you will be 18 years of age or older on or before Election Day.

Check yes to confirm that you are a US citizen. – Do NOT check yes if you have not completed your oath ceremony. Wait to fill out the form until after your ceremony.

### **Box 2. Application Type**

Check the box for the kind of application you are making:

1. Application for new voters
2. Application to change name, address or political party

### **Box 3. Name - Required**

Print your name. Make sure to print your full legal name, the same way it is listed on your official identification. Do not use a nickname or shorter name.

To the far right, enter your Driver's License Number OR the last 4 digits of your Social Security Number. If you have a PA non-driver's identity card, you can enter that number in the Driver's License section.

If you do not have any of these numbers, do not leave this section blank. Instead, write "NONE" in this space. If you leave this section blank, your application could be delayed.

### **Box 4a. Address of Residence - Required**

Write your address. (The address where you live.)

If you get your mail at a different address, such as a Post Office Box (P.O. Box) or a business address, you can write that address in Box 5.

*-Exception: Homeless people can register using an area shelter as their address.*

**Box 4b. Telephone number**

We suggest that you list your telephone number so that the voter registration office can contact you faster if there are any problems or questions about your application form. But your telephone number is not required.

**Box 4c. Municipality and County of Residence**

If you don't know the answer, leave this blank. The commissioner's office will complete this information for you.

**Box 5. Mailing Address**

You should only complete this box if your mailing address is different from your street address. For example, if you want to get your mail at a P.O. Box or at work, enter that address here. This mailing address will be used by the County Voter Registration office to send Voter Identification Cards.

**Box 6. Date of Birth - Required**

You must be 18 years old before or on the day of the next election. This includes primary elections, which are usually held in May. If you will not be 18, you should wait until after that election to register to vote. First enter the month, then the day, then the year that you were born.

**Box 7. Race (Optional)****Box 8 a & b. Name, Address, County and Year of Previous Registration**

First time voters leave this box blank.

If you have ever been a registered voter at a different address or under a different name (for example before you got married), enter this information so that the office can cancel your old registration and enter the new information.

**Box 9. Political Party – Sometimes Required**

You must fill out this box if you want to vote in a primary election. Primary elections are elections where only the members of a party vote for which candidate will represent their party in the general election.

- If you do not want to register with a political party, check “no affiliation.”
- If you want to be able to vote in a party’s primary election, you must register with that party. Select your party from the list or mark “other” and write in your party name.

All registered voters can vote in referendums (special questions that the voters decide), special elections, and general elections. Sometimes, on the same day, there will be a primary election and a referendum (special question). If you are not registered with a party, you will be able to vote on the referendum but not the primary candidate.

**Box 10. Voter Identification Number**

First time voters leave this box blank. You do not have a voter identification number yet. If you have registered to vote before but do not know this number, just leave this box blank.

**Box 11. Registration Declaration - Required**

Sign the form to say that all of the information is true. If you do not sign, your application cannot be processed.

Print your name and the date in the boxes below your signature.

**Box 12. Name of Assistant**

You are allowed to have someone help you complete the form. If someone helped you to complete the form, they must list their name, address and phone number.

## Sample Voter Registration Form



[www.dos.state.pa.us](http://www.dos.state.pa.us)

### PENNSYLVANIA VOTER REGISTRATION MAIL APPLICATION

#### To Register You Must:

- Be a citizen of the United States for at least one month before the next election;
- Be a resident of Pennsylvania and your election district for at least 30 days before the next election;
- Be at least 18 years of age on the day of the next election.

#### GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

1. Please provide all information on the application as required. Read all instructions carefully before you fill out the application.
2. If you are currently registered, you do not need to re-register unless you have moved or changed your name since you last registered to vote.
3. In order to vote at the next election, this application must be received by your county voter registration office 30 days before the election, or postmarked no later than the thirtieth day before the election. *Military elections may apply at any time.*
4. Write the mailing address for your county voter registration office, on the reverse side of this application and place the proper postage in the designated area. Addresses for all Pennsylvania counties are listed inside.
5. You are not registered to vote until your application has been processed and accepted by the county voter registration office. If accepted, the county voter registration office will send you, via mail-orderable mail, a Voter Identification Card. If you do not receive a Voter Identification Card within 14 days of the date you submit this application, contact your county voter registration office.
6. If you decline to register to vote, your decision will remain confidential. If you register to vote, the office at which you register will remain confidential.

#### IDENTIFICATION WHEN YOU VOTE

Pennsylvania law requires that registered voters who appear in person to vote for the first time in an election district after December 9, 2003, must present a form of identification. If you are voting for the first time in your county and you intend to vote by absentee ballot, please include a copy of a form of identification with this voter registration mail application. Otherwise, you will be required by federal law to include a copy of a form of identification with your absentee ballot. (For information on the acceptable forms of identification and the exceptions to these identification requirements, please contact the voter registration commission in your county of residence.)

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#### ADDRESSES OF COUNTY VOTER REGISTRATION OFFICES

To mail this application, write the address of the County Voter Registration Office at the proper area on the reverse side of this form.

<b>ADAMS COUNTY</b> 311 BROADWAY ST GETTYSBURG, PA 17325-0212 (717) 337-8000	<b>CHESTER COUNTY</b> 80 WESTON PA. PARKWAY WEST CHESTER, PA 19380-0001 (610) 344-4100	<b>ALTOON COUNTY</b> 144 MARKET ST. STE. 300 ALTOON, PA 15717-0001 (717) 465-3801	<b>BERKSHIRE COUNTY</b> 1 COLFAX BLVD. BERKSHIRE, PA 16713-1207 (717) 866-3800 EXT. 2104	<b>BELLEVILLE COUNTY</b> P.O. BOX 10 LAPORTE, PA 16860-0010 (814) 944-0200
<b>ALLEGANY COUNTY</b> 100 W. MAIN ST. PITTSBURGH, PA 15219-0002 (412) 231-4100	<b>CLARION COUNTY</b> 407 MAIN ST. CLARION, PA 16717-0001 (814) 769-4400 EXT. 2000	<b>BRIDGE COUNTY</b> 801 WEST ST. 801 WINGSPAN, PA 15781 (717) 465-0200	<b>BUCKS COUNTY</b> 20 N. MARKET ST. DOVER, PA 17002-0110 (717) 346-8171	<b>BUTTE COUNTY</b> P.O. BOX 218 MCKEAN, PA 16833-0218 (814) 274-4400 EXT. 200
<b>ARMEDONG COUNTY</b> 100 W. MAIN ST. PITTSBURGH, PA 15219-0002 (412) 231-4100	<b>CLAY COUNTY</b> 201 MARKET ST. STE. 100 CLAYTON, PA 16031 (814) 786-2400 EXT. 3000	<b>BUTLER COUNTY</b> 301 PENN. COLLEGE BLVD. ALTOON, PA 15717-0001 (717) 465-3801	<b>DADE COUNTY</b> ONE JAMES PLACE, 101 STROUDSBURG, PA 16814-0110 (814) 517-0100	<b>TYDA COUNTY</b> P.O. BOX 100 WILKES-BARE, PA 16894-0100 (814) 754-0100
<b>ARMSTRONG COUNTY</b> 100 W. MAIN ST. PITTSBURGH, PA 15219-0002 (412) 231-4100	<b>CLINTON COUNTY</b> 201 MAIN ST. GARDEN SQUARE BLDG. CLINTON, PA 17015-0001 (717) 884-4100	<b>DADE COUNTY</b> 201 PENN. COLLEGE BLVD. ALTOON, PA 15717-0001 (717) 465-3801	<b>DADE COUNTY</b> 201 PENN. COLLEGE BLVD. ALTOON, PA 15717-0001 (717) 465-3801	<b>DADE COUNTY</b> 201 PENN. COLLEGE BLVD. ALTOON, PA 15717-0001 (717) 465-3801
<b>BEAVER COUNTY</b> 100 W. MAIN ST. PITTSBURGH, PA 15219-0002 (412) 231-4100	<b>COLUMBIA COUNTY</b> 201 MARKET ST. P.O. BOX 100 COLUMBIANA, PA 17015-0001 (717) 884-4100	<b>JEFFERSON COUNTY</b> 100 MAIN ST. JEFFERSON PLACE BRIDGEBURG, PA 16833-1001 (814) 846-0000	<b>MONTGOMERY COUNTY</b> COUNTY COURSE HOUSE BLDG. MONTGOMERY, PA 19102-0111 (610) 278-2000	<b>DADE COUNTY</b> 201 PENN. COLLEGE BLVD. ALTOON, PA 15717-0001 (717) 465-3801
<b>BEVERLY COUNTY</b> 211 S. CLAYTON ST. P.O. BOX 100 BEVERLY, PA 15512-0100 (814) 425-4000	<b>CHAMBERS COUNTY</b>	<b>JUNIATA COUNTY</b>	<b>NORTHAMPTON COUNTY</b>	<b>DADE COUNTY</b>

## *Get Ready for Election Day*

### **Make Sure Your Registration Was Accepted**

You should receive a voter identification card from your County voter registration office two weeks after they get your voter registration form.

If there is a problem with your registration form, you should receive a voter notification card or a letter explaining why your registration was not accepted (and a form to re-apply).

If you have not received any materials from your county voter registration office within a few weeks of mailing your registration, call the voter registration office for your county and ask them for an update. A list of county voter registration offices and telephone numbers is included at the back of this guide.

Even if you never get a voter identification card from your county office, you may still be registered. Call your county office to ask. You do not need to have a voter identification card with you to vote.

### **Learn About the Issues**

Your vote is your decision. To help you decide who to vote for, you can find out more information about the candidates and about the issues that are important to you from:

- Watch the news on television
- Listen to the news on the radio
- Watch candidate debates on television
- Read the newspaper
- Read news magazines
- Talk with family and friends
- Call the candidates directly
- Call the state or local committees of political parties
- Read candidate Web sites or political blogs on the Internet

## Find your polling place

Your polling place location is printed on your voter ID card.

You may also locate your polling place by contacting your county elections office or by calling the Department of State at 1-877-VOTESPA (1-877-868-3772).

## Bring Identification

If you are voting in Pennsylvania for the first time or if you are voting in a new polling place for the first time, federal and state laws require you to provide election officials with proof of identification.

### Approved forms of photo identification

(ID must be valid)

- PA driver's license or ID card issued by PennDOT
- ID issued by any other Pennsylvania agency
- ID issued by the U.S. Government
- U.S. Passport
- U.S. Armed Forces ID
- Student ID from a college or high school
- Employee ID

### Approved forms of non-photo identification

(ID must include the name and address of the elector)

- Voter's identification card issued by the voter registration commission
- Non-photo ID issued by the Commonwealth
- Non-photo ID issued by the U.S. Government
- Firearm permit
- Current utility bill (does not have to be paid)

- Current bank statement
- Current paycheck
- Government check

If you forget to bring ID and are required to show it

You can choose to go home to get your ID. Once you show your ID, you should be allowed to vote on a regular ballot (on the machine).

OR

If you cannot or do not want to go home to get your ID, you can vote on a provisional ballot.

### **Provisional Ballot**

A provisional ballot can be used if there are questions about whether you are eligible to vote

- If your name does not appear in the register (poll book).
- If you are in the register (poll book), but were required to bring ID and do not have it.
- An election official says you are not eligible to vote.

A provisional ballot is a special, paper ballot that you can use to vote. After you finish filling it out, seal it in the privacy envelope, and return the sealed envelope to the voting official. Make sure they give you a receipt. Save the receipt — you will need the ballot number to check what happened to your vote.

Within seven days after the election, the county board of elections will examine the provisional ballot to determine if you are allowed to vote. If you are eligible, they will open the envelope and count your vote.

After the seven days have passed, you can check to see if your provisional ballot was counted. Call 1-877-VOTES-PA or visit [www.votespa.com](http://www.votespa.com) and click on the left link named Provisional Ballot Status. Enter your Provisional Ballot Identification Number from your receipt to find out if your ballot was counted. If it was not, it will state why not.

## **Absentee Ballot**

If you cannot vote at the official polling place on Election Day, you may be allowed to vote using an absentee ballot. Some examples are people serving in the military, people who will be away on business or vacation, people celebrating a religious holiday or people who are disabled.

You must apply for an absentee ballot before the election! If you know that you will need an absentee ballot, we urge you to apply several weeks before the election to allow for any delays.

Contact your county voter registration office or go to [www.votespa.com](http://www.votespa.com) to get more information about deadlines, or to request an absentee ballot.

## ***Voter Rights***

### **1. You have the right to vote if you are a registered voter and if your registration is valid.**

A valid registered voter is a United States citizen who is:

- a resident in the state
- at least 18 years old
- not in prison or on parole for felony conviction
- and who is registered to vote at their current address

### **2. You have the right to cast a provisional ballot (to vote with a provisional ballot) if your name is not listed on the voting rolls.**

### **3. You have the right to vote if you are present and in line at the polling place before the polls close.**

### **4. You have the right to cast a secret ballot (to vote in secret).**

- No one can find out who you voted for.
- No one can intimidate you or threaten you to change your vote.

**5. You have the right to get a new ballot if, before you cast the ballot, you believe you made a mistake.**

Absentee voters may also get a new ballot if they return their incorrect ballot to an Elections official before polls close on Election Day.

**6. You have the right to get help in casting your ballot, if you are unable to vote without it.**

**7. You have the right to receive assistance in casting your ballot, if you are unable to vote without assistance.**

**8. You have the right to election materials in another language, if 5% of registered voters in your precinct speak that language.**

**9. You have the right to ask questions about election procedures and observe the elections process.**

You can ask questions of the precinct board and election officials regarding election procedures and receive an answer or be sent to the appropriate official for an answer.

However, if a lot of questioning disrupts the official from doing his job, the board or elections officials may stop answering questions.

**10. You have the right to report any illegal or fraudulent activity to a local elections official or to the Pennsylvania Department of State office.**

*If you believe you have been denied any of these rights, or if you are aware of any election fraud or misconduct, please call the Department of State at 877- VOTESPA (868-3772).*

## *Understanding Elections for State and Local Government in Pennsylvania*



When you go to the polling place to vote, you vote for more than federal government officials. You also vote for officials at the state and local level. It is important to participate in all of these elections, because each level of government makes decisions that can affect your life. For example, local government provides important services like local police and fire protections, schools and health programs to the people that live there. Both state and local governments decide how much we must pay in taxes.

### **Pennsylvania State Government**

Pennsylvania state government is set up the same way as federal government. Pennsylvania has a state constitution, and three branches of government - Executive, Legislative, and Judicial. Just like the federal government, the Legislative branch makes the laws, the Executive branch enforces the laws, and the Judicial branch interprets the laws.

#### **Executive Branch**

Registered Pennsylvania voters elect

- The Governor and Lieutenant Governor
- The Attorney General, who handles legal cases for the state
- The Auditor General, who handles the accountability of the Commonwealth's government operations.
- The State Treasurer, who is in charge of the Commonwealth's treasury and acts as its head banker.

The Governor's cabinet (or advisors) is not elected. They are appointed by the Governor to head certain state government agencies and be advisors to the Governor.

For more information on the Governor's responsibilities, and for a list of the state government agencies, go to [www.governor.state.pa.us/](http://www.governor.state.pa.us/)

## **The Pennsylvania Legislative Branch**

Registered Pennsylvania Voters elect

- A State Senator
- A State Representative

Pennsylvania's State Senate has 50 Senators and Pennsylvania's House of Representatives has 203 members. Together, these two bodies are called the General Assembly, and basically work the same way as the federal Congress.

For more information about the Pennsylvania Legislative Branch, you can visit the following Web sites:

- General Assembly: [www.legis.state.pa.us/](http://www.legis.state.pa.us/)
- House of Representatives: [www.house.state.pa.us](http://www.house.state.pa.us)
- State Senate: [www.pasen.gov](http://www.pasen.gov)
- Center for Rural Pennsylvania: [www.ruralpa.org](http://www.ruralpa.org)

## **The Pennsylvania Judicial Branch**

Registered Pennsylvania voters elect

- Pennsylvania Supreme Court and District Court Judges

Pennsylvania has a unified judicial system, which means that the State Supreme Court supervises all of the other courts. The judicial system may be thought of as a pyramid, with the Supreme Court at the top, going all the way down to local courts at the bottom.

For more information about the Pennsylvania courts, go to [www.courts.state.pa.us](http://www.courts.state.pa.us).

## County Government

Registered Pennsylvania Voters elect

- county commissioners
- sheriff
- district attorney
- county auditor
- register of wills
- recorder of deeds
- clerk of courts
- prothonotary

There are 67 counties in Pennsylvania, including Philadelphia, which is both a city and a county. Everyone in Pennsylvania lives in one of these counties.

## Municipal Government

Registered Pennsylvania Voters elect

- mayors
- council people
- township supervisor
- district judges

There are different kinds of local governments. You might live in a city, borough, or township. Each is governed by a local council, which is elected by local citizens.

## *Primary Elections and Special Elections*

### **What is a primary election?**

A primary election is an election in which voters from a specific political party pick the candidate they want from a pool of candidates from their party. The candidate who gets the most votes will be the candidate representing a specific party in the general election. At this election, it is possible that a ballot may contain a question.

#### **With Ballot Question**

- Registered Democrats and Republicans may vote on the ballot of their respective party.
- Voting precincts affected by the ballot question would permit all other registered voters within that precinct to vote on a separate ballot, which would contain only the ballot question.

#### **Without Ballot Question**

- Registered Democrats and Republicans may vote on the ballot of their respective party.

### **What is a Special Election?**

A special election is held when something happens to someone who is already in office and must be replaced. This could occur for many reasons, including criminal activity, the incumbent's death, or the incumbent's retirement.

In the case of this election, all eligibly registered voters in the district can vote.

## *Common Questions and Answers*

### **1) Do I ever have to register again?**

Maybe. If you move, change your name, or want to change your political party, you must register again. When you fill out your new application, check the option in Box 2 that fits your situation.

### **2) How will I know if I am registered?**

You will receive a voter notification card from the county or a letter explaining why you're registration was not accepted (and a form to re-apply). If the notification card or letter does not arrive within two weeks of mailing your registration, call your Registrar of Voters or County Elections Office and ask if you are registered.

### **3) What if I made a mistake or forgot to answer everything?**

Don't worry. Your county voter registration offices will examine every application. If something is wrong or if you didn't provide necessary information, they will call you or send you a letter explaining the information that they need. You can also call your County voter registration office if you are worried. There is a list of County voter registration offices at the end of this booklet, which has addresses and phone numbers.

### **4) What if my form is submitted after the registration deadline?**

If you complete the form after the voter registration deadline, you will not be able to vote in the upcoming election, but you will be registered to vote in time for the following election.

### **5) Will I remain a registered voter even if I don't vote?**

Yes. Under the National Voter Registration Act of 1993, counties can no longer take you off the list of registered voters just because you have not voted. However, you could be placed on the inactive list if you do not respond to an address confirmation notice. If you are placed on the inactive list, you might be removed from the voter registration rolls if you do not vote in the following two federal elections.

**6) What if I'm not an American citizen today, but I expect to be one before the registration deadline?**

Do not submit a voter registration application today! Instead, take a form and complete it after you become a citizen. You must be a citizen at the time you complete the application.

**7) Why is my driver's license number or the last 4 digits of my Social Security number being collected and how will it be used?**

The driver's license or Social Security number is collected so that the County voter registration office can give you a voter ID number. They use this number to keep their voter roles updated. Your information will be kept confidential.

*Note: Your driver's license or the last 4 digits of your Social Security number do not have to be matched or verified with PennDOT or Social Security before you can become a registered voter. If your county voter registration office cannot match these numbers, they can create a special number to process your application.*

**8) What if I don't know the municipality or county where I live?**

That's OK. As long as you provide your correct address where you live (not necessarily your mailing address), your County Voter Registration Office will be able to determine your municipality and county.

**9) What if I don't know the year of my previous registration, or my voter identification number?**

If you are a new citizen, registering to vote for the first time, you do not have a voter number yet. If this is not your first time, but you still don't know this information, don't worry. You will still be registered if you do not complete this information.

**10) What if Box 9 (political party affiliation) is left blank?**

You do not need to choose a party in order to vote in the general election, or on special questions (called a voter referendum). You only have to fill in this box if you want to vote in a Primary election. Only people who are registered with a political party can vote in that party's primary election, where you choose which candidate will represent your party in the general election. If you do not want to choose a party, mark "Unaffiliated."

**11) What if I move right before the election?**

Don't worry. Even if you move right before the election, you can vote at your old polling place one last time. Or you can go to the polling place for your new address and cast a provisional ballot, because you won't be on the rolls yet. Or you can request an absentee ballot in advance. Information on how to get an absentee ballot is available in this booklet.

As soon as possible, fill out a new voter registration application with your new information, so you can become registered to vote at your new home. Mark "Change of Address" in Box 2.

**12) What if I want to change my political party?**

You can change your registration whenever you like, simply by submitting a new voter registration form. There is also a national form available, which is accepted in every state.

**13) Are materials provided in other languages?**

You have the right to election materials in another language, if 5% of registered voters in your precinct speak that language. Spanish language materials are available in many precincts. Voter registration forms are available in several languages at [www.votespa.org](http://www.votespa.org). This handbook is also available in several languages.

**14) Can I register for someone else?**

No. You can only register for yourself. You may help others fill out a form, but they must sign the form themselves, even if they just sign with an X.

## *County Voter Registration Offices*

### **Adams County**

111-117 Baltimore St.  
Gettysburg, PA 17325-2312  
(717) 337-9832

### **Allegheny County**

542 Forbes Ave., Ste. 604  
Pittsburgh, PA 15219-2953  
(412) 350-4500

### **Armstrong County**

Administration Bldg.  
500 E. Market St.  
Kittanning, PA 16201  
724-548-3222

### **Beaver County**

810 3rd St.  
Beaver, PA 15009  
724-728-3934 ext 11298

### **Bedford County**

200 S. Juliana St.  
P.O. Box 166  
Bedford, PA 15522-0166  
814-623-4807

### **Berks County**

633 Court St., 1st Fl.  
Reading, PA 19601  
610-478-6490

### **Blair County**

423 Allegheny St., Ste. 043  
Hollidaysburg, PA 16648-2022  
814-693-3150

### **Bradford County**

301 Main St.  
Towanda, PA 18848-1878  
570-265-1717

### **Bucks County**

55 E. Court St.  
Doylestown, PA 18901-4318  
215-348-6163

### **Butler County**

P.O. Box 1208  
Butler, PA 16003-1208  
724-284-5308

### **Cambria County**

200 S. Center St.  
Ebensburg, PA 15931  
814-472-5440

### **Cameron County**

20 E. 5th St.  
Emporium, PA 15834-1469  
814-486-2315

### **Carbon County**

Broadway & Hazard Sq.  
P.O. Box 129  
Jim Thorpe, PA 18229-1029  
570-325-4801

### **Centre County**

420 Holmes St.  
Bellefonte, PA 16823-1488  
814-355-6703

Chester County  
601 Westtown Rd.  
P.O. Box 2747  
West Chester, PA 19380-0990  
610-344-6410

Clarion County  
421 Main St.  
Clarion, PA 16214-1093  
814-226-4000 ext 2205

Clearfield County  
230 E Market St., Ste. 108  
Clearfield, PA 16830  
814-765-2641

Clinton County  
232 E. Main St.  
Garden Bldg., 3rd Fl.  
Lock Haven, PA 17745-1385  
570-893-4019

Columbia County  
35 W. Main St., P.O. Box 380  
Bloomsburg, PA 17815-0380  
570-389-5640

Crawford County  
903 Diamond Park  
Meadeville, PA 16335-2678  
814-333-7306

Cumberland County  
37 E. High St., Ste. 104  
Carlisle, PA 17013-3044  
717-240-6385

Dauphin County  
2 S. 2nd St., P.O. Box 1295  
Harrisburg, PA 17108-1295  
717-780-6360

Delaware County  
Government Center Bldg.  
201 W. Front St.  
Media, PA 19063-2728  
610-891-4659

Elk County  
300 Center St.  
P.O. Box 448  
Ridgeway, PA 15853  
814-776-5337

Erie County  
140 W. 6th St., Rm. 105  
Erie, PA 16501-1096  
814-451-6275

Fayette County  
22 E. Main St.  
Public Service Bldg.  
Uniontown, PA 15401  
724-430-1289

Forest County  
526 Elm St., Box 3  
Tionesta, PA 16353  
814-755-3537

Franklin County  
157 Lincoln Way East  
Chambersburg, PA 17201-  
2211  
717-261-3886

Fulton County  
116 W. Market St., Ste. 203  
McConnellsburg, PA 17233  
717-485-3691

Greene County  
93 N. High St., Rm. 102  
Waynesburg, PA 15370  
724-852-5230

Huntington County  
223 Penn St., Courthouse  
Huntington, PA 16652-1486  
814-643-3091

Indiana County  
825 Philadelphia St.  
Indiana, PA 15701-3934  
724-465-3852

Jefferson County  
155 Main St., Jefferson Pl.  
Brookville, PA 15825-1269  
814-849-1605

Juniata County  
Bridge St., P.O. Box 68  
Mifflintown, PA 17059  
717-436-7706

Lackawanna County  
135 Jefferson Ave., Ste. 100  
Scranton, PA 18503  
570-963-6737

Lancaster County  
150 North Queen St., Ste. 102  
Lancaster, PA 17603-3562  
717-299-8293

Lawrence County  
430 Court St.  
New Castle, PA 16101-3593  
724-656-2161

Lebanon County  
400 S. Eighth St.  
Lebanon, PA 17042-6794  
717-274-2801 Ext 2243

Lehigh County  
17 S. 7th St.  
Allentown, PA 18101-2400  
610-782-3194

Luzerne County  
20 N. Pennsylvania Ave.  
Ste. 207  
Wilkes-Barre, PA 18701-3505  
570-825-1715

Lycoming County  
48 W. Third St.  
Williamsport, PA 17701-0536  
570-327-2267

McKean County  
500 W. Main St., Courthouse  
Smethport, PA 16749  
814-887-3203

Mercer County  
5 Courthouse  
Mercer, PA 16137-1227  
724-662-3800 Ext 2240

Mifflin County  
20 N. Wayne St.  
Lewistown, PA 17044  
717-248-6571

Monroe County  
One Quaker Plaza, Rm. 105  
Stroudsburg, PA 18360-2170  
570-517-3165

Montgomery County  
Courthouse  
P.O. Box 311  
Norristown, PA 19404-0311  
610-278-3280

Montour County  
29 Mill St.  
Danville, PA 17821  
570-271-3000

Northampton County  
Wolf Bldg., 45 N. Second St.  
Easton, PA 18042-3695  
610-559-3055

Northumberland County  
609 Market St.  
Sunbury, PA 17801-2360  
570-988-4208

Perry County  
P.O. Box 37  
New Bloomfield, PA 17068-  
0037  
717-582-2131 Ext. 4110

Philadelphia County  
520 N. Delaware Ave.  
5th Fl.  
Philadelphia, PA 19123-4295  
215-686-1505

Pike County  
506 Broad St.  
Milford, PA 18337-1535  
570-296-3426

Potter County  
1 E. Second St., Rm. 22A  
Coudersport, PA 16915-1690  
814-274-8467

Schuylkill County  
114 S. Claude A. Lord Blvd.  
Pottsville, PA 17901-3602  
570-622-3040

Snyder County  
P.O. Box 217  
Middleburg, PA 17842-0217  
570-837-4209

Somerset County  
300 N. Center Ave., Ste. 510  
Somerset, PA 15501  
814-445-1549

Sullivan County  
P.O. Box 157  
Laporte, PA 18626-0157  
570-946-5201

Susquehanna County  
P.O. Box 218  
Maple St.  
Montrose, PA 18801-0218  
570-278-4600 EXT 220

Tioga County  
118 Main St.  
P.O. Box 589  
Wellsboro, PA 16901-0589  
570-723-8230

Union County  
155 N. 15th St.  
Lewisburg, PA 17837-8822  
570-524-8681

Venango County  
1174 Elk St.  
P.O. Box 831  
Franklin, PA 16323-0831  
814-432-9514

Warren County  
204 Fourth Ave.  
Warren, PA 16365-2399  
814-728-3401

Washington County  
100 W Beau St., Rm. 206  
Washington, PA 15301  
724-228-6750

Wayne County  
925 Court St.  
Honesdale, PA 18431-1996  
570-253-5978

Westmoreland County  
2 N. Main St., Ste. 109  
Greensburg, PA 15601  
724-830-3150

Wyoming County  
1 Courthouse Sq.  
Tunkhannock, PA 18657-1216  
570-996-2226

York County  
Administrative Center  
28 E. Market St.  
York, PA 17401-1256  
717-771-9604

## *Glossary*

**Absentee Ballot** — A ballot submitted, usually by mail, in advance of an election by a voter who is unable to be present at the polls.

**Ballot** — Voting form or list of candidates and special questions.

**Ballot Question** — A question that appears in an election of specific statewide or local issues on which the voter can vote 'yes' or 'no.'

**Cast a Ballot** — Vote.

**Candidate** — A person who seeks an office, honor, etc.

**Citizenship** — The act of being a citizen; being a member of a community.

**County Board of Elections** — A county body that oversees all aspects of elections in that given county.

**Election Day** — Day established for the election of public officials.

**Election Official** — Person appointed by the county to oversee the conduct of elections.

**Eligible** — Qualified to participate or be chosen.

**Executive Branch** — The branch of government charged with putting into effect a country's laws and the administering of its functions.

**General Election** — An election held in even-numbered years, usually on the 1st Tuesday after the 1st Monday in November.

**Identification** — Records or documents that prove you are who you say you are.

**Judicial Branch** — The branch of government responsible for the administration of justice.

**Legislative Branch** — The branch of government that has the power to create laws.

**Nomination** — The act or an instance of submitting a name for candidacy or appointment.

**Political Affiliation** — Being a member of a given political party.

**Polling Place** — A place or room provided in each election district for voting in a primary or general election.

**Precinct** — A voting area (where you must vote).

**Primary Election** — An election held for the purpose of electing party officers and nominating candidates for public office to run for that party.

**Provisional Ballot** — A paper ballot used if and when:

- 1) voter's name does not appear in register book;
- 2) the voter does not have proper identification; and
- 3) an election official says voter not eligible to vote

**Register** — To enroll formally as a voter.

**Residence** — The place where one actually lives as distinguished from a temporary place of dwelling.

**Special Election** — Any election other than a regular general, municipal or primary election.

**Voting Booth** — Machine or area where you vote.

# Voting Guide for New Pennsylvania Citizens



Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
Department of State  
Bureau of Commissions, Elections and Legislation  
[www.dos.state.pa.us](http://www.dos.state.pa.us)  
[www.VOTESPA.com](http://www.VOTESPA.com)  
717-787-5280  
1-877-VOTESPA (1-877-868-3772)