
KNOW YOUR RIGHTS MASSACHUSETTS

Here's what you need to know if you're voting in Massachusetts in 2012:

VOTER REGISTRATION

Where can I register to vote?

You may register to vote:

- In person or by mail, by completing a mail-in registration form and delivering it to your city or town election office;
- At any local election office in any city or town in the state and at any registration event you encounter anywhere in Massachusetts; or
- When applying for or renewing your driver's license at the Registry of Motor Vehicles or when applying for service at a designated voter registration agency. Registration forms also are available at all colleges, universities, high schools and vocational schools.

You may use the secretary of the commonwealth's online voter registration form request feature—www.sec.state.ma.us/ele/elestu/stuidx.htm—to obtain a mail-in registration form, or call 1-800-462-VOTE and a form will be sent to you. You also can download a National Voter Registration form at www.eac.gov/voter_resources/register_to_vote.aspx.

What is the deadline to register to vote?

For the Sept. 6, 2012, primary, the voter registration deadline is Friday, Aug. 17.

For the Nov. 6, 2012, general election, the voter registration deadline is Wednesday, Oct. 17.

When registering by mail, your voter registration form must be postmarked by the deadline for you to be eligible. Mail the completed form to your local city or town hall. To register to vote in person, you must appear and register at a registration location by 8 p.m. on the last day to register.

PROOF OF IDENTITY

Do I have to show a photo ID?

No, photo ID is not required to vote in the commonwealth of Massachusetts.

However, if you are registering to vote for the first time in Massachusetts, you will be required to provide identification when you vote for the first time in a federal election, or you can send in a copy of your identification with your voter registration form. If you send in a copy of your identification with your mail-in voter registration form, it may not be returned to you.

Acceptable identification must include your name and the address at which you are registered to vote—for example, a current and valid driver's license, photo identification, current utility bill, bank statement, paycheck, government check or other government document showing your name and address.

EARLY VOTING

Early voting is not allowed in Massachusetts. If you are unable to make it to the polls on Election Day, please see the next section of this guide for information about eligibility requirements to vote by absentee ballot.

ABSENTEE VOTING

Who is eligible to vote absentee?

Massachusetts allows a voter to vote by absentee ballot if you:

- Will be absent from your city or town on election day, and/or
- Have a physical disability that prevents your voting at the polling place, and/or
- Cannot vote at the polls due to religious beliefs.

You may have an absentee ballot mailed to you or you may vote at your city or town hall by making arrangements with your local election official.

To be counted, a completed ballot must be received by the time the polls close on Election Day.

How do I request an absentee ballot?

To have a form mailed to you, you must apply in writing to your city or town clerk or election commission. Submit your application early to allow sufficient time for the ballot to be mailed to you and be returned by the close of polls on Election Day.

Although the deadline to apply for an absentee ballot is noon the day before the election, we highly recommend submitting the application as early as possible to ensure you get a ballot.

An application form is available at your local election office or you may download one online at www.sec.state.ma.us/ele/elepdf/absentee_ballot.pdf.

Can I vote with an absentee ballot in person?

Yes, if you are eligible and you wish to vote absentee at your city or town hall, contact your local election official. Contact information can be found at www.sec.state.ma.us/ele/electck/clkidx.htm. Plan to visit the office two or three weeks before the election. You can make your application and cast your vote in one visit.

What is the deadline to return completed absentee ballots?

To be counted, a completed ballot must be received by your local election official by the time the polls close on Election Day. Alternatively, you or a family member may hand-deliver it to the local election official. Your completed ballot cannot be hand-delivered directly to your polling place on Election Day.

If you have any questions, visit www.sec.state.ma.us/ele/ or contact the Secretary of the Commonwealth's Elections Division at 1-800-462-VOTE.

For more information, please contact votingrights@afcio.org.

