

Voting for Students

For many students, voting is a new experience and registering to vote is the first step in the process. Students must decide where to register and whether they will need an absentee ballot.

Some students attending school in Massachusetts may consider their school address their residence for voting purposes while others may still consider their home address their residence for voting purposes. In either case, the student must register in order to be eligible to vote. Below please find frequently asked questions regarding voting for students.

Do I need to register to vote?

If you would like to vote in Massachusetts, you must be registered by twenty days before the election or town meeting, or ten days before a special town meeting.

I am a student living in Massachusetts for college. Do I need to register to vote in Massachusetts or my home state?

You may register in either state depending on which address you consider your residence for voting purposes. You may register from your home state and request that an absentee ballot be mailed to you, or you may register to vote from your Massachusetts address. You may not, however, be registered to vote in more than one place.

I am a Massachusetts resident living out of state for school. How do I vote?

If you consider your Massachusetts home address your residence for voting purposes, you may request that your city or town mail you an absentee ballot. While the deadline to request an absentee ballot is 12 noon on the day before the election, please be sure to allow enough time for the ballot to reach you and to be returned to your city or town by Election Day.

Do I need identification to vote in Massachusetts?

Federal law requires that any person registering to vote by mail for the first time, or for the first time in a new state, must provide identification. Mail-in registration forms ask for either a Massachusetts driver's license number or the last four digits of your social security number, and registrants are encouraged to enclose a copy of their identification with the form. First-time voters in Massachusetts should also bring some type of identification to their polling place when they go to vote. This does not need to be a photo identification card. Acceptable forms of identification include: a Massachusetts driver's license or state ID card; a utility bill; a government-issued check; a paycheck or paystub; or any other official document bearing the voter's name and address. Please note that passports, birth certificates, naturalization papers, and student IDs without addresses are not acceptable forms of identification. Many students get letters from their schools listing their student address for such purposes.

For more information on Voting in Massachusetts, visit <http://www.sec.state.ma.us/ele/eleifv/howreg.htm>