



Michigan Participation Project

Voter Assistance Info Sheet

WHO CAN VOTE?

To register to vote in Michigan you must be:

- a U.S. citizen
- at least 18 years of age by election day
- a resident of Michigan and the city or township where you are applying to register to vote
- Not currently incarcerated *and convicted* (NOTE: If someone is incarcerated but awaiting a trial or have not yet been convicted, they may still vote.)

I am homeless. Can I vote?

YES. When you register, you may use the address of the shelter where you sleep at night as your residence, or you may use the two nearest cross-streets to where you sleep at night. If you do not currently have a valid photo ID, you can sign an affidavit to verify your identity.

I have a criminal record. Can I vote?

YES. Michigan allows an individual to vote even if they have been convicted in state or federal court, unless the person is currently incarcerated. Ex-offenders automatically regain the right to vote after completion of prison sentence. Ex-offenders on probation or parole are eligible to vote. It is recommended that ex-offenders re-register or update their voter registration after completion of sentence.

I am in the military. Can I vote?

YES. For instructions and assistance, visit the Federal Voting Assistance Program, <http://www.fvap.gov/>

I am a college student. Where do I vote?

Where to register: If you are eligible to vote in Michigan, you must register where you maintain your principal residence in the state. As a college student, you can register from your campus address or the address where you previously resided before moving to campus (provided that you still view your previous address as your “principal” residence in the state).

The 30 Day Rule: Always keep in mind that almost any change you make to your voter registration status will take 30 days to get through the system. Give your clerk enough time to get you onto the voter file before an election, or plan to vote at home if you change your address the day before the election. If you don't get your new registration in 30 days before an election, you aren't going to vote.

How to register: You can register by visiting any Secretary of State branch office or your local city or township clerk's office. You can also register to vote by mail. If you plan to register by mail, plan to show up on election day. If you haven't already voted and want to vote absentee, plan to drop in on the clerk to register.

Other things you need to know:

- The law requires Michigan residents to use the same residential address for both vote registration and driver license purposes. Therefore, if the address you submit on a voter registration application does not match the address on your driver license, the Department of State will mail you an address update sticker for your driver license. (The address update sticker will be handed to you if you register to vote in a Secretary of State branch office.)
- Regardless of the address you use for voter registration and driver license purposes, you can maintain a separate “mailing address” if you wish to receive mail pertaining to your voter registration and driver license at a different address.
- You are free to change your voter registration/driver license address as frequently as needed. No fees are assessed for address changes.
- Since MI only keeps one "principal address" on record for your driver's license and your voter registration, if you change one, you'll change them both. You can tell where you're expected to vote if your driver's license is current.

English is not my primary language.

The Voting Rights Act requires particular polling locations to print ballots and other election materials in languages other than English, and have oral translation help available at polls, where the need exists.

In Michigan, ballots printed in Spanish are only mandated in two locations:

- Clyde Township, Allegan County
- Buena Vista Township, Saginaw County

Others may post at their own discretion, but it is not required. Requests for non-English ballots should go to County Clerk. **Voters are allowed to bring someone with them to assist with reading and understanding the ballot.**

FINDING MY LOCAL CLERK

- Visit www.publius.org
- Call Michigan Bureau of Elections at 1-800-292-5973

REGISTER TO VOTE <http://www.michparticipationproject.org/register-to-vote>

Deadline to Register:

You must register at least 30 days before the election – OCTOBER 6, 2008. This gives the clerk time to process the forms and send you a Voter Identification Card.

- **Mail-in Forms:** A mail-in voter registration form can be obtained. Mail the completed form to the address indicated on the form. If you register by mail, you must vote in person at your assigned precinct the first time you vote, unless you are:
 - disabled as defined by state law
 - 60 years of age or older
 - temporarily residing overseas
- **If you are temporarily outside the U.S.,** you may use a Federal Postcard Application (FPCA) form to register. The FPCA forms are distributed through U.S. embassies and military bases. A Michigan resident who moves and registers out of state may not re-register to vote in Michigan until he or she reestablishes residency here.
- **You may register at the same time you renew your driver's license by mail.** Eligible drivers receive a voter registration application in the mail with their driver's license renewal information.
- You may participate in a **Voter Registration Drive** hosted by a local group or organization. Make sure your form will be turned into the clerk by the October 6 deadline.

I AM MOVING

Whenever you move to a new city or township, you must re-register to vote. If you move within a city or township, **you must update your address.** This can be handled through your local clerk, at a Secretary of State branch office, or by mail. *Michigan voters must use the same residential address for voter registration and driver's license purposes.* Consequently, if you submit a driver's license address change, it will be applied to your voter registration. Similarly, if you submit a voter registration address change, it will be applied to your driver's license.

ABSENTEE BALLOTS <http://www.michparticipationproject.org/vote-absentee>

Absent voter ballots are available for **all elections.** They provide voters with a convenient method for casting a ballot when they are unable to attend the polls on election day.

SPECIAL NOTE: A person who registers to vote by mail **must** vote in person in the first election in which he or she participates. The restriction does not apply to overseas voters, voters who are handicapped or voters who are 60 years of age or older.

As a registered voter, you may obtain an absent voter ballot if you are:

- age 60 years old or older
- unable to vote without assistance at the polls
- expecting to be out of town on election day
- in jail awaiting arraignment or trial
- unable to attend the polls due to religious reasons
- appointed to work as an election inspector in a precinct outside of your precinct of residence.

YOU MUST:

- **Send your absentee ballot request form to your local clerk.** . Requests to have an absent voter ballot mailed to you must be submitted to your clerk **no later than 2 pm the Saturday before the election.**
- **After receiving your absent voter ballot, you have until 8 p.m. on election day to complete the ballot and return it to the clerk's office.** Your ballot will not be counted unless your signature is on the return envelope and matches your signature on file. If you received assistance voting the ballot, then the signature of the person who helped you must also be on the return envelope. Only you, a family member or person residing in your household, a mail carrier, or election official is authorized to deliver your signed absent voter ballot to your clerk's office.
- **If an emergency**, such as a sudden illness or family death prevents you from reaching the polls on election day, you may request an emergency absent voter ballot. **Requests for an emergency ballot must be submitted after the deadline for regular absent voter ballots has passed but before 4 p.m. on election day.** The emergency must have occurred at a time which made it impossible for you to apply for a regular absent voter ballot. Your local clerk will have more information about emergency absent voter ballots.

VOTING – Process and Problems

www.michigan.gov/vote This Web site provides you with a vast assortment of information related to voter registration and election administration in Michigan.



With this tool you can:

- Determine if you are registered to vote
- Find your polling location
- Contact your local election official
- Learn to use your voting equipment
- Find answers to frequently asked questions

How do I find my polling location? When is it open?

- Polls are open from 7:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m.

- To find your polling place, visit one of these websites (you will need your name, birth date and zip code):
 - www.publius.org
 - www.michigan.gov/vote
- You can also call your county clerk or Township Hall.

What do I do if I don't have a photo ID?

If you do not have photo ID, you can still cast a ballot simply by signing an affidavit. The affidavit can be used by:

- Voters who do not have acceptable photo ID
- Voters who have photo ID but didn't bring it to the polls

Once you sign the affidavit, you may cast your ballot. It will be counted with all other ballots on Election Day.

What You Need to Bring with You on Election Day:

RETURNING VOTERS:

If you have voted in Michigan before, you can check your name in the Publius website. If your polling location appears to be in order, you really only need to **bring yourself** to the polls.

If you have a Michigan Driver's License, you can bring that along, or you can just sign an affidavit saying you don't have ID with you.

NEW VOTERS

New Voters must meet the new federal ID requirement. As a first time Michigan voter you must provide identification before voting if you:

- 1.) registered by mail and
- 2.) have never previously voted in Michigan and
- 3.) have not already satisfied the identification requirement.

Acceptable ID includes a current and valid photo ID or a paycheck stub, utility bill, bank statement or government document that lists your name and address.

The requirement does not apply to voters who are disabled or overseas.

SPECIAL NOTE: In order for new voters to vote absentee, you must show ID to a designated election official (generally your clerk or someone at the Secretary of State's office). If you didn't register in-person, you can apply for an absentee ballot at your clerk's office and show ID when you apply.

I have a disability – where can I get assistance?

If you require voting assistance, ask the election workers for help; a reason for the needed assistance does not have to be stated. Two inspectors will assist you in the voting station. An elector who is blind, disabled, or unable to read or write may be assisted with his or her ballot by any person of the voter's choice, except the following: the voter's employer or agent of that employer, or an officer or agent of a union to which the voter belongs.

You can also call:

- Michigan Protection & Advocacy Service, Inc., TOLL FREE 1-800-288-5923 (Voice or TTY)
- Local Department on Aging/Council on Aging
- Local office - Department of Human Services
- Local office - Community Mental Health
- Local office - Secretary of State or 888-767-6424

They won't let me vote – what can I do?

Ask the person at the poll why you are unable to vote. Contact the Secretary of State if the person has any questions or concerns.

On the day of the election, you can contact...

- Michigan Protection & Advocacy Service, Inc., TOLL FREE 1-800-288-5923 (Voice or TTY)
- Michigan Department of Civil Rights www.michigan.gov/mdcr

There was a problem at my polling place – how do I report it?

Contact the City, Village or Township Clerk or the Secretary of State.

TRANSPORTATION

Where can I get a ride?

- For free transportation through nonprofit organizations or local public transportation authorities, refer to the Transportation Database provided to 211 call centers
- For other possible transportation assistance, consider:
 - Local/State Party offices
 - Faith-based entities or organizations
 - Neighborhood organizations/associations
 - Senior service organizations
 - Friends and family

BALLOT INFORMATION

1. Who is running?
2. What proposals are on the ballot?

Visit:

- www.michparticipationproject.org/whats-on-the-ballot
- www.publius.org
- www.michigan.gov/vote (can find sample ballot for each district)
- Local League of Women Voters guides with links on www.michparticipationproject.org

Also – Township Offices will have copies of the ballot, and many local newspapers will publish them.

SERVE as a Poll Worker

Precinct inspectors are people who are paid to assist voters at the polls on Election Day. Registered voters interested in serving as election inspectors must submit an election inspector application to their local clerk. In addition to their name, address and date of birth, applicants must include their political party preference and qualifications to fill the position such as education or experience.

A precinct inspector must be a registered voter of the county. They cannot be a challenger, candidate, member of a candidate's immediate family, or a member of the local Board of Canvassers. Anyone convicted of a felony or an election crime may not serve.

Precinct inspectors are covered by the federal Minimum Wage Act.

Your city or township clerk will be able to answer any questions about how to apply to become a precinct inspector.

Resources

- Michigan Participation Project - www.michparticipationproject.org
- League of Women Voters/Publius - www.publius.org
- Michigan Secretary of State - www.michigan.gov/vote