

Voting & Elections



To make early childhood issues and programs a top priority on the legislative agenda, we have to make early childhood an issue in elections, learn candidates' positions, and most importantly, vote on election day. In the months leading up to elections, elected officials and candidates are generally accessible throughout their districts at local events. These events are opportunities to talk publicly about the importance of early childhood issues and to find out about an official's or candidate's support for them.

While individual citizens have the right to participate in political campaigns and vote, laws limit the participation of nonprofit organizations in electoral activities.

Elections

State and federal elections take place every even-numbered year. Federal elections held during non-presidential election years are known as mid-term elections. There are two main dates to keep in mind each election year: the date of the primary election and the date of the general election.

The Illinois primary election takes place on the first Tuesday in February during each election cycle. The primary election reduces the field of candidates to one per political party in preparation for the general election.

The general election takes place on the first Tuesday in November after the first Monday of the month. The general election is when voters select which candidate will represent them in public office at the state and federal levels.

Voter Registration FAQs

What are the voter registration requirements?

- Must be a U.S. citizen.
- Must be at least 18 years old by election day.
- Must have been a resident of the precinct at least 30 days prior to election day.

What forms of identification are needed to register to vote?

- Two forms of identification with at least one showing a current residence address (when registering in person).
- When registering by mail, one form of identification is needed that shows current residency.

Do I ever have to re-register to vote?

- Only if you move or legally change your name.

When can I register to vote?

- Voter registration takes place year-round.
- Registration must take place at least 27 days before election day.
- Individuals who miss the registration deadline are still eligible to vote as long as they register or transfer their registration at the office of an election authority under the guidelines of “grace period registration.”

Where can I register to vote?

- Any municipal, county, state, or other government office.
- At the office of any elected official.
- Schools.
- Public libraries.
- Military recruitment offices.
- Driver’s license facilities.
- Via mail.
 - Download voter registration applications in English and Spanish at <http://www.elections.il.gov/VotingInformation/Register.aspx>
 - Voter registration applications must be postmarked prior to the close of registration.

When can I consider myself officially registered to vote?

- When you receive your voter ID card in the mail.
- If a voter ID card is not received within three weeks after registering, call the election office.

How can I vote absentee?

- You must vote in person the first time you vote.
- Learn about the rules and procedures surrounding absentee voting at:
<http://www.elections.state.il.us/Downloads/ElectionInformation/PDF/absevote.pdf>

For more information

- Voter registration in Illinois
<http://www.elections.state.il.us/Downloads/ElectionInformation/PDF/registervote.pdf>
- Voter rights
http://www.elections.state.il.us/Downloads/VotingInformation/PDF/Illinois_Voter_Information.pdf

Permissible Election Activities for 501(c)(3) Organizations

501(c)(3) public charity organizations are strictly forbidden from engaging in any political activity in support of or in opposition to any candidate for public office. However, 501(c)(3) public charity organizations can engage in nonpartisan voter education activity and in a limited amount of lobbying. Read the Alliance for Justice’s checklist of permissible election activities for 501(c) organizations at <http://www.afj.org/assets/resources/resource1/Electoral-Activities-Checklist.pdf>.