

Michigan Elections 2018: How to Vote, How to obtain an Absentee Ballot

How to Register to Vote in Michigan

Hello NAMI members, in this section we want to help you become aware and active of mental health policy so that your voice to be heard in our political system. Let's talk about voting as an important feature of our American democracy.

We choose our elected officials in two steps: the first step is to nominate candidates from each political party during the primary election, which is typically held in the spring or summer. A **primary election** is the process where the public indicates their preference for a candidate for a political office out of all the other candidates from that same party. The next step is the **general election** where we decide which candidate is the winner.

For example, when you vote in the Republican primary, you will be choosing which one of the Republican candidates (out of all the Republican candidates running in that race) you wish to stand for election in the general election. If you vote in the Democrat primary, you will be choosing which candidate (out of all of the Democrat candidates running in that race) that you wish to stand for election in the general election. This process repeats for each political party that is competing in the primary election.

In Michigan, we have a **primary election** scheduled for **August 7, 2018** - which means the last day to register to vote in that election is **July 9, 2018**.

Our **general election** is **November 6, 2018**, which means the last day to register to vote in that election is **October 9, 2018**.

Polls will be open from **7:00 A.M. E.S.T to 8:00 P.M. E.S.T** for most of Michigan except the southwest portion of the Upper Peninsula, which is on C.S.T.

Do you need a ride to the polls? Or, would you like to volunteer to help drive people who lack transportation? Many organizations are willing to help with transportation to the polling place. Carpool Vote is offering free rides where you can sign up for a ride or offer to be a driver <http://carpoolvote.com/>

Now lets talk about voting -- are you eligible to vote?

By clicking on this link, you can find out if you are already registered to vote.

Hot link <https://webapps.sos.state.mi.us/MVIC/>

Okay, so how do I register?

Hot link: http://www.michigan.gov/sos/0,1607,7-127-1633_8716_8726_47669-175878--_00.html

To register to vote, you must be all of the following:

- A U.S. citizen
- At least 18 years old by Election Day
- A resident of Michigan

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- A resident of the city or township where you are applying to register to vote.

If you want to check to see if you are registered, visit www.Michigan.gov/vote. There you will find information about registering to vote and voting, voting equipment, polling place locations, state and local ballots, the candidates, campaign finance and more. Your local clerk can help with questions about your voter registration, polling place location and working at the polls.

Second, here is how you register to vote:

You must be registered to vote at least 30 days before the election, so keep that in mind if you are registering with the intention of voting in an upcoming election.)

You may obtain the application at one of the following:

- Your local Secretary of State branch office
- Your local county, city, or township clerk's office
- Offices of several state agencies, like the Department of Human Services, the Department of Community Health, and the Department of Labor and Economic Growth
- Military recruitment centers
- Voter registration drives
- **Online at www.Michigan.gov/sos**

Michigan law states that **the same address must be used for voter registration and driver's license purposes.**

Third, submit your application to your local city or township clerk's office:

If you hand-deliver your application, the staff person helping you will take your form and you don't need to do anything else.

If you have never registered to vote in Michigan and choose to mail in your application, you will need to meet an identification requirement. This means you must:

- Enter your driver's license number or personal identification card number where requested on the form. OR
- Send a *copy* of **ONE** of the following forms of identification with your application:
 - A *photocopy* of your driver's license or personal ID card, or
 - A *photocopy* of a paycheck stub, utility bill, bank document or government document that lists both your name and your address.

NEVER SEND AN ORIGINAL DOCUMENT!

Fourth, your city or township clerk will process your application

Your city or township clerk will send you a voter registration card upon processing your application. Keep it in your wallet or purse so you know where to go to cast your ballot.

For directions and a map to your polling place, visit www.Michigan.gov/vote.

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Last, you may now vote!

When you go to the polls on Election Day, you will be asked to present voter identification. If you don't have acceptable photo ID, you can vote by signing an affidavit. The affidavit can be used by 1) voters who don't have acceptable photo ID or 2) voters who have photo ID - but didn't bring it to the polls.

Acceptable photo ID includes:

- Michigan driver's license
- Michigan personal identification card
- Driver's license or personal identification card issued by another state
- Federal or state government-issued photo identification
- U.S. passport
- Military identification card with photo
- Student identification with photo from a high school or an accredited institution of higher education, such as a college or university
- Tribal identification card with photo.

If you do not have a driver's license or other acceptable photo identification, you can get a state identification card at your local Secretary of State branch office for \$10. State ID cards are free to individuals who are 65 or older or blind or who have had driving privileges terminated due to a physical or mental condition. The fee can also be waived for individuals who present other good cause for a fee waiver. Proof of identity and residency are required when applying for a state ID card.

Next, we will discuss how to obtain an absentee ballot:

(Hot link http://www.michigan.gov/sos/0,4670,7-127-1633_8716_8728-21037--,00.html)

First, are you eligible for an absentee ballot?

A registered voter may obtain an absent voter ballot if they 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.

Check your voter registration at [Michigan Voter Information Center www.mi.gov/vote](http://www.mi.gov/vote)

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 disabled or voters who are 60 years of age or older.

How to Request an Absent Voter Ballot

Your request for an absent voter ballot must be in writing and can be submitted to your city or township clerk. (For assistance in obtaining the address of your city or township clerk, see

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Hot link: <https://www.Michigan.gov/vote>)

Your request must include one of the six statutory reasons (see above section) and your signature.

You must request an absent voter ballot by mailing the application, large print application, a letter, a postcard, or a pre-printed application form obtained from your local clerk's office. Requests to have an absent voter ballot mailed to you must be received by your clerk no later than 2 p.m. the Saturday before the election.

Once the local clerk receives your request, your signature on the request will be checked against your voter registration record before a ballot is issued. You must be a registered voter to receive an absent voter ballot.

Requests for absent voter ballots are processed immediately. Absent voter ballots may be issued to you at your home address or any address outside of your city or township of residence.

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.
