



**Guide for Registering and Assisting People to Vote in North
Carolina**

**The League of Women Voters of the Lower Cape Fear
www.lcflwv.org
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Selecting a Site:

- It is important to choose a good location where you will be seen. Signage for your effort is very important. You want folks to properly identify your purpose for being there and they will often want to know whom you represent. A “Register to Vote Here” sign gets their attention. If you have a sign indicating what group you represent, have that there too. Often people are annoyed if they think you are pushing a candidate or an agenda. If you, like the League of Women Voters, are non-partisan, let them know.
- Make sure that the location you have selected is approved in advance. Get permission or some confirmation that spot is acceptable. You can sometimes float with a clipboard without undue problems, but it is always wise to check in advance.
- It is always advisable to tell your county Board of Elections that you are doing a voter registration drive at a specific location so they can say that they are aware of your drive. Sometimes this can be an issue.

Voter Registration Forms and Process:

- Have the latest forms with you. Sometimes Boards of Elections are fine with forms that are slightly older than the latest version, but always check to make sure. The voting laws change and with them the forms for registering voters also change. Ask your local county Board of Elections which form they are using now. These forms are dated at bottom lower left corner and have a number up in the right hand corner as well. Have clipboards and pens with dark blue or black ink with you.
- Bring a supply of Absentee Ballot Request Forms with you. These allow those who wish to vote but cannot be at their home polling place to vote using a ballot as an absentee voter. Have the address for the local Board of Elections with you too. You can give it to those who want to take the form with them to mail it in later. These forms can be printed in some county Board of Elections offices with the county board specific return address already there. New Hanover County also posts their county specific version on its website.

- You can register voters from any part of North Carolina. The county Boards of Elections are set up to accept out-of-county forms. They scan and send them to the proper county.
- It is important to know that a person registering in North Carolina, must be a resident 30 days prior to the next election if they intend to vote in the upcoming election. They also must register 25 days in advance of the next election or choose to vote using a provisional ballot at an Early Voting Site. It is possible to register and vote at the same time during Early Voting, but not on Election Day. It is important to meet the 25-day requirement if possible. If a voter, however, does not meet the 30-day residency requirement before the election, he or she is not eligible for same day registration during Early Voting. He or she would be eligible to vote in their previous jurisdiction if that was in NC. Provisional ballots are offered to all voters that do not meet eligibility requirements.
- As much as possible, have the applicant fill out as much information as possible on the form as this speeds up the process. Note the top of the form that shows two required fields. They sometimes get missed, especially with the use of clipboards. The applicant must fill out those fields. You are never allowed to add information to another's registration form once the applicant finishes that process, so having applicants complete as much as possible when they are filling out the forms is critical. Required fields are, however, the most important part. If something is missed on a form, the Board of Elections will do what they can to reach the person who filled out the form. A phone number, while not required, helps make this possible.
- Giving either the last four digits of a Social Security Number or a drivers license number will help the Board of Elections verify the applicant's identity. This is especially important for voters that are registering and voting in NC for the first time. If a voter does not provide one of these numbers upon registering, he or she will be asked to provide "proof of person" identification on Election Day.
- Residency requirements are important to understand. This is often confusing as applicants will put down a mailing address with a PO number, but that is different from an address for a residence and if the applicant has both, they should record both. The Board of Elections uses the applicant's mailing address to send a confirmation postcard. Also, some voters are in the process of moving and they will ask if they need to put down their current address before they move or the one they will use in the near future. Make sure that the voter will meet the residency requirement to guide this decision. If they will be in the new residence 30 days prior to the election, they should put in that residence. Otherwise, they will need to fill out another form when their address changes.

- For students at college away from home, they can continue to consider their parents' or guardian's home as their permanent residence OR they can use their current campus or off-campus address. If they use their home address, it is advisable for them to ask for an absentee ballot or go home to vote. If students choose to use the address of their residence at college, they need to know the address for the residence hall if living in that kind of housing. Remember, a PO address is not a residence. Most campuses have information for students to identify the precise address for a specific hall. Students need to consider the following: Does the student intend to go back to his or her home residence following college, is the student unsure about this, or does the student intend to go elsewhere after completing his or her studies? If a student intends to go back to their home residence, that is where the student should register and vote. If unsure of future plans, then registering at the college address would be preferable.
- If this is a new home residence for the registrant, but not the first time they are registering, ask them to please fill out the former address. This allows the voter registration rolls to be purged of names of voters who have moved.
- Unaffiliated voters are like Independent voters in other states, but there is no Independent Party recognized in NC. Unaffiliated simply means no connection or wanted identification with a specific political party. Unaffiliated voters may vote in Primary Elections but they must select which major party ballot they want for that primary election. Unaffiliated voters make up about 1/3 of the number of registered voters in NC. To change party affiliation or name (marriage), one must fill out a new form. Any major change means a new form must be completed. Residential address, mailing address, and name changes do not have to be completed on a registration form, although this is BEST PRACTICE. Changes, however, can be made via written and signed notice from the voter.
- If someone has committed a felony in the past but has completed the sentence (meeting all probation and parole requirements) for that crime and has had citizenship rights reinstated, he/she may register to vote.
- No photo ID will be required to vote.
- Currently, you can pre-register 16 and 17 year olds who will not be 18 by Election Day, but to legitimately vote in the upcoming election, one must be 18 before Election Day.

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Other Things to Know:

- What is a **Provisional Ballot**? If a voter goes to the wrong precinct on Election Day or has not given some critical piece of information required at the polls or has some issue with their registration, that voter will be given a provisional ballot. This is a paper ballot that the voter will use for the election in question. A provisional ballot, along with other information the voter will be asked to provide, is reviewed by the County Board of Elections and their staff after Election Day. The procedure for examining provisional ballots is called Canvass by the Board of Elections. Election results are not considered final until after Canvass Day. For each provisional ballot, as much of the ballot that is acceptable for that voter will be hand counted. However, if a voter voted for a race that would not be on their precinct's ballot had they voted properly, that vote will not count. If there is no proof that the voter registered properly or if there are other major issues about the ballot, then the ballot will likely be considered invalid and not counted.
- Completed voter registration forms must be taken to the local Board of Elections offices no later than 5 days after the forms are completed. Once the Board of Elections has the registration recorded, they will send out a postcard with information verifying that the voter is registered and stating the proper polling location and voting district information. One does not need to bring that to the polls to vote.
- During **Early Voting**, voters may go to any site with Early Voting hours within their county. These hours and sites are listed on the county website once they are determined by the county board and approved by the State. Remember, these are not precincts but some also serve as precincts once Election Day arrives. On Election Day, it is important to tell the voter to go to their assigned precinct if possible. Otherwise, a provisional ballot is used.
- When you get to the polls, the Board of Elections poll worker will ask for your name and your address. They will verify you are on the rolls. If they do not find your name or there are other problems, you will vote using a provisional ballot. In partisan elections, the voter will be asked to state their party affiliation.
- There are options for voters: Absentee Ballots; Early Voting sites; Precincts on Election Day; and Curbside Voting. The latter is for use by those who cannot ambulate into the polling place. A poll worker will come out to the curb where the voter is in a car and help with the process of voting. There are also bi-partisan teams who will go into a nursing home or other facility to help an individual who wants to vote. That process must start with a request to the Board of Elections.

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- Direct people to their county's website for their Board of Elections. There they will find sample ballots, Early Voting information, etc. Another very important site is the
- NC State Board of Elections. This is the best place to ensure that your name does appear on the polling rolls. (www.ncsbe.gov)
- The NC Department of Motor Vehicles and some Social Service agencies take voter registration information and that information should go directly to the respective Board of Elections. If a voter has filled out the form at one of these locations but has not received verification from the Board of Elections with a postcard within a month's time, call the local Board of Elections or go online first to the NC Board of Elections website and see if the name of the voter appears as a registered voter.
- Much of what is on a voter registration form is considered information that is open to the public under the Freedom of Information Act. However, things that could result in identity theft are not shared, i.e. driver's license number, date of birth, or Social Security information.
- Boards of Elections do collect, collate, and will offer statistical data on voting and voters. Some of these data can be found at their websites.
- Last, if you can have useful information on websites where voters can visit for more information, lists of Early Voting times and locations, Sample Ballots, etc., that also helps engage those who already registered to vote.

Note: Elections laws change. It is always important to know the latest information on how to proceed when registering or helping voters. If unsure of a particular fact or approach, contact your county board of elections for guidance.

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