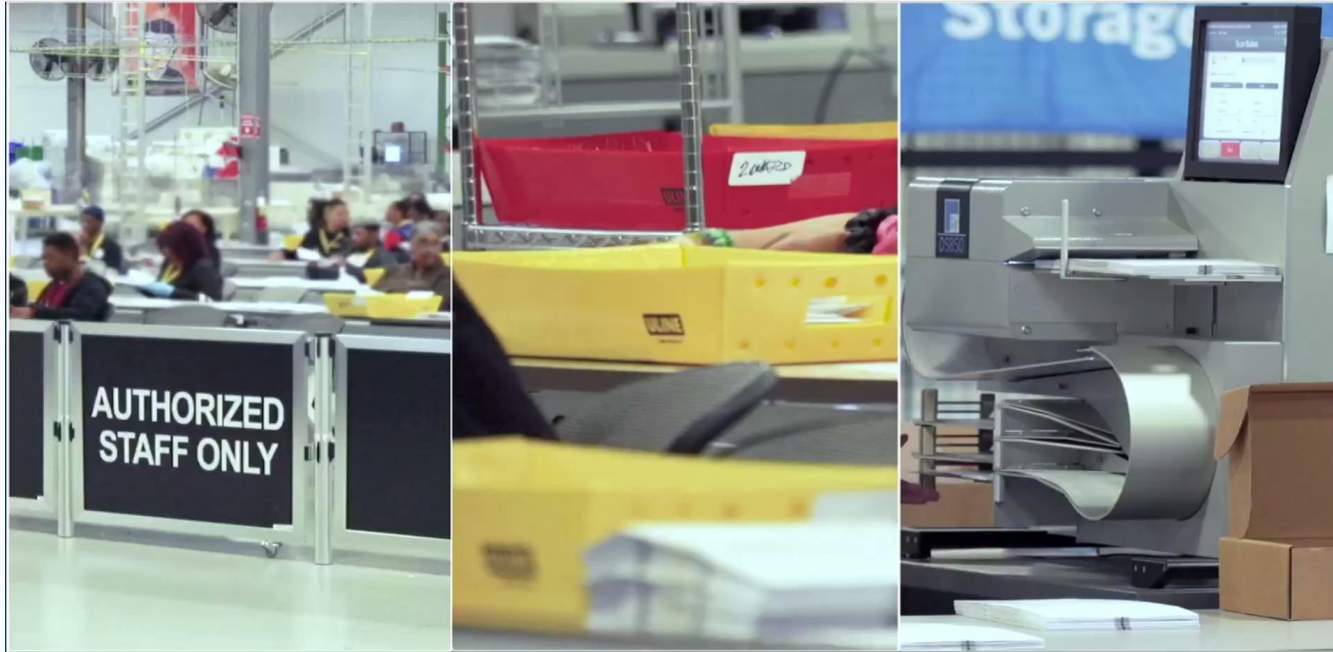


Pennsylvania Elections



COMMITTEE
of SEVENTY

seventy.org

Today's Agenda

- About the Committee of Seventy
- Voter Registration
- Voting in Pennsylvania
- Post Election Audits
- Security

A large, light blue stylized number '70' is centered in the background. The '7' is formed by two overlapping shapes, and the '0' is a solid circle. The text is overlaid on this graphic.

The Committee of Seventy is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that has promoted, supported and facilitated government ethics and election integrity for over 120 years.

We advocate for more free, fair, safe and secure elections and work to ensure that every eligible voter votes, is informed when they vote, and votes with confidence.

VALUES



REPRESENTATION



INTEGRITY



EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE



Some important recent history

Pennsylvania changed its election code greatly in 2019 through what is known as Act 77.

This legislation:

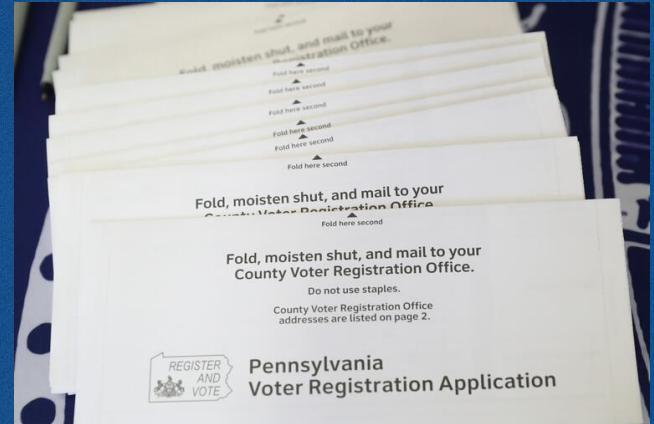
- Allows any eligible voter to cast a ballot by mail
- Ended straight party voting

This legislation was an important step forward but has created a number of issues that the legislature has not fixed, requiring court intervention. We have seen litigation regarding

- Envelope dating
- County's responsibility to notify voters of mistakes
- Voter's opportunity to correct mistakes

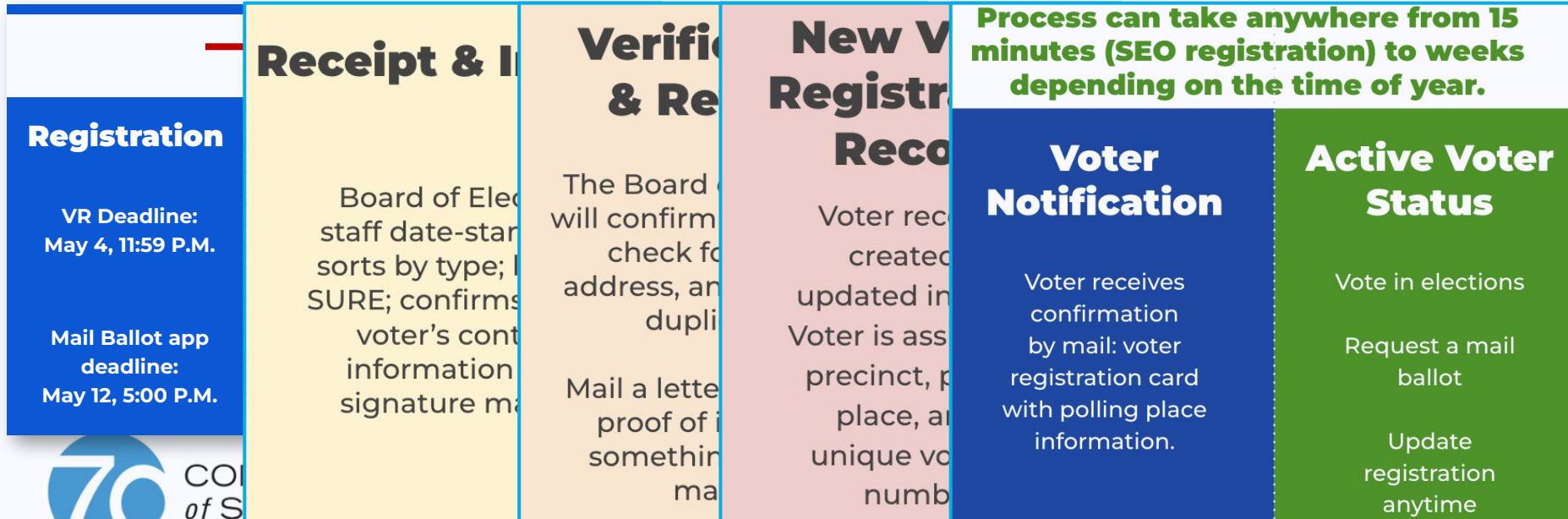


Voter Registration

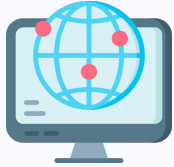


The Lifecycle of a Registration Application

After a voter registration application is submitted, it must be processed.

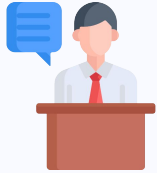


There are several ways to register to vote.



REGISTER ONLINE:

Visit vote.pa.gov to register to vote using the Pennsylvania Department of State's online application portal.



REGISTER IN PERSON:

Visit a **County Election Office Office**, or register at PennDOT.



REGISTER BY MAIL:

You can download a registration application from your county website and mail back to them directly.

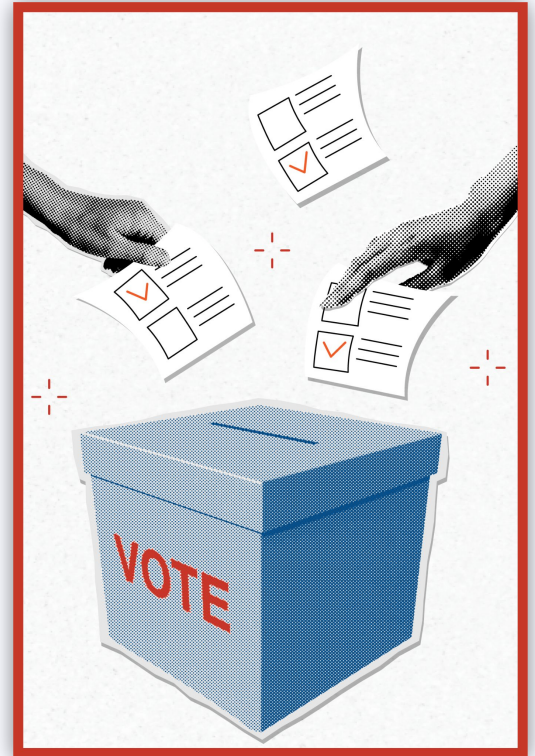
An online application or registering in person is always better than paper.

Voter Registration Requirements

To vote in Pennsylvania, you must be:

- A US citizen for at least one month
- A resident of Pennsylvania for at least 30 days
- A resident of your election district for at least 30 days
- At least 18 years old

Eligible citizens **must submit a voter registration application.** Applications must be received no later than 15 days before the next election.



Updating Voter Registration Status

Always begin by checking your VR status:
vote.pa.gov/register

When do you need to update your voter registration?

- Moved or changed address
- Name change
- Political party affiliation

*****There's no expiration on your voter registration*****



PA ONLINE VOTER REGISTRATION

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

VOTER REGISTRATION APPLICATION

Deadline Alert: 05/04/2026 is the last day to register before the 05/19/2026 election.

If you are not a U.S. citizen and a resident of Pennsylvania at least 30 days before the next election, you CANNOT register to vote.

If you have any questions, please call 1.877.VOTESPA (1.877.868.3772).

Your registration is not complete until processed and accepted by your county voter registration office.

To vote in the next election, you must complete your application by 05/04/2026. You can submit your application:

- On this web site
- Delivered to your county voter registration office.
- By mail to your county voter registration office, received by 05/04/2026.

Click here to download a blank voter registration form

- If you are on active duty in the military, or you are a hospitalized or bedridden veteran, you can register at any time. See www.hsp.gov for more information.

If you have one, please have your PA driver's license or PennDOT ID available to reference as you complete the application.

Also, please know any section or field that's marked with a red indicator or an asterisk (*) is required to be filled out in order to submit an application.

Please avoid the use of "Autofill" features when completing your application.

Frequently Asked Questions

1>Your Name

First Name

Middle Name/Initial

Last Name

Suffix

2.Eligibility *

If you answer "No" to either question, you cannot register to vote.

To register you must:

- Be a United States citizen at least 30 days before the next election
- Be a resident of Pennsylvania and your election district for at least 30 days before the next election
- Be at least 18 years of age on the day of the next election

Are you a citizen of the U.S.?

Yes No

Will you be 18 years or older on or before election day?

Yes No

3. Reason *

If you are currently registered to vote, you do not have to use this application unless you have moved or changed your name. Please check at least one box.

I am Not Registered

Keeping the Voter Rolls Updated

SURE security is built on layers. No single safeguard is enough on its own.

(Statewide Uniform Registry of Electors)

- **Protected government IT network, meaning**
 - Restricted access to local election staff and limited state officials
 - Unique user accounts, role-based permissions, multi-factor authentication
 - Every action inside SURE is logged: who accessed, what changed, when it happens
- **Data integrity measures, including**
 - Matching against PennDOT and Social Security databases
 - Duplicate detection and address validation
- **Governed by PA Election Code and federal laws**
 - National Voter Registration Act
 - Help America Vote Act



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Verifying Voters

The SURE - Statewide Uniform Registry of Electors - system is PA's official statewide voter registration database used to confirm voter eligibility and track ballot status.

Key Takeaways:

- Pennsylvania's official voter database
- Confirms registration and eligibility
- Used for provisional ballot review
- Public observation permitted



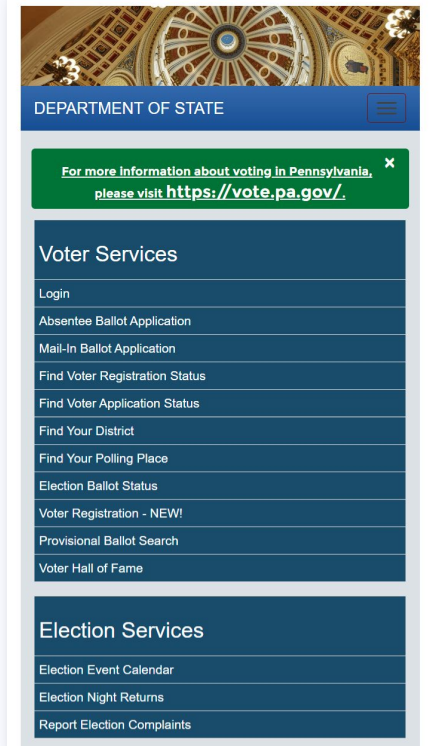
SURE is the secure system counties use to manage voter records; voters view ballot status through Pennsylvania's public tracking website.

Verifying Voters

The SURE system also helps poll workers identify voters who have requested or returned a mail ballot by syncing their voter record.

Key Takeaways:

- Poll workers can see if a voter requested a mail ballot
- Voters may surrender mail ballot to vote on the machine
- If the ballot is not surrendered, the voter may vote provisionally
- **The system helps prevent duplicate voting**



What is the
voter roll
anyway?

ELECTIONS

Pennsylvania rebuffs federal request for voter rolls containing personal data

by Carter Walker of Votebeat | Aug. 21, 2025



COMMONWEALTH MEDIA SERVICES

This article is made possible through [Spotlight PA's](#) collaboration with [Votebeat](#), a nonpartisan news organization covering local election administration and voting. [Sign up for Votebeat's free newsletters here.](#)

Pennsylvania told the U.S. Justice Department that it will not give federal officials a version of the state's voter rolls that contains personal information, rebuffing a request from the agency.

"This request, and reported efforts to collect broad data on millions of Americans, represent a concerning attempt to expand the federal government's role in our country's electoral process," Secretary of the Commonwealth Al Schmidt [said in a letter Thursday](#) responding to the request.

Schmidt, a Republican, said that his department could provide a public version of the voter rolls, known as the Full Voter Export, which contains information such as name, age, address, and vote history, but that it was prohibited by law from providing voters' Social Security and driver's license numbers.

The voter roll is the official list of who can vote, not for whom they vote.

Why Pennsylvania isn't sharing voter roll data with the federal government

National Voting Rights Act (NVRA), **Help America Vote Act** (HAVA), and the **Civil Rights Act** don't provide authority to the federal government for such a broad request to access all such information on all Pennsylvania voters.

PA's privacy laws prohibit the Department of State from sharing personally identifiable information.

The Lifecycle of a Registration Application

After a voter registration application is submitted, it must be processed.

1

2

3

Process can take anywhere from 15 minutes (SEO registration) to weeks depending on the time of year.

Registration

VR Deadline:
May 4, 11:59 P.M.

Mail Ballot app
deadline:
May 12, 5:00 P.M.

Receipt & Intake

Board of Election staff date-stamps it; sorts by type; logs in SURE; confirms that a voter's contact information and signature match.

Verification & Review

The Board of Elections will confirm the identity, check for a valid address, and check for duplicates.

Mail a letter asking for proof of identity if something doesn't match.

New Voter Registration Record

Voter record is created or updated in SURE. Voter is assigned a precinct, polling place, and a unique voter ID number

Voter Notification

Voter receives confirmation by mail: voter registration card with polling place information.

Active Voter Status

Vote in elections

Request a mail ballot

Update registration anytime



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The voter roll is updated daily.

1

How applications are received:

- Submitted online through the state system
- Delivered in person by the applicant or third party
- Received by mail
- Forwarded through PennDot, the Department of Health, or approved voter registration partners

Receipt & Intake

Board of Election staff date-stamps it; sorts by type; logs in SURE; confirms that a voter's contact information and signature match.

How applications are reviewed and processed:

Paper Applications:

- Entered in to the system one by one
- Reviewed for accuracy and completeness
- Staff follow up with registrant if information is unclear, or if they have questions
- If there's something missing, the applicant will get a letter

Digital Applications:

- Reviewed in SURE by BOE staff
- Approved or declined based on eligibility
- If there's something missing, the applicant will get a letter.

3 Once approved, SURE will update the voter record and retain a transaction log of all changes.

Voters don't disappear from the voter roll, but they do show as **inactive.**

All it means is that they haven't voted for five years.



The Process of Removing Voters

First, the voter must become inactive:

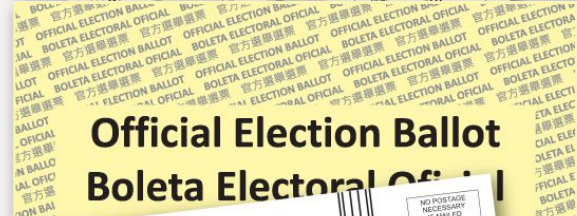
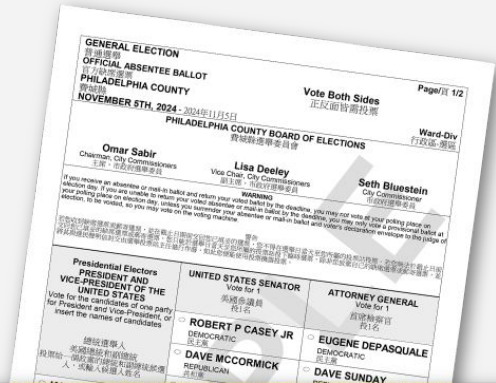
- National Change of Address (NCOA) notification
- Electronic Registration Information Center notification
- Undeliverable correspondence
- Haven't voted for five years

Second, if they fail to vote or update their record for two consecutive federal general elections, their registration will be canceled. Alternatively, they can send a **voter registration cancellation form**.

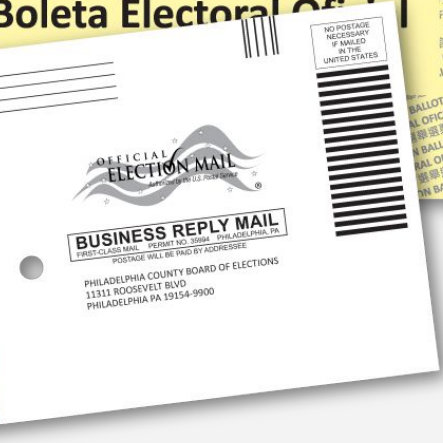
The entire process often takes 8-9 years!

How do we process deceased voters? The Department of Health sends death notifications and the BOE marks them approved, which triggers a cancellation in SURE.

Casting a ballot



Official Election Ballot Boleta Electoral Oficial



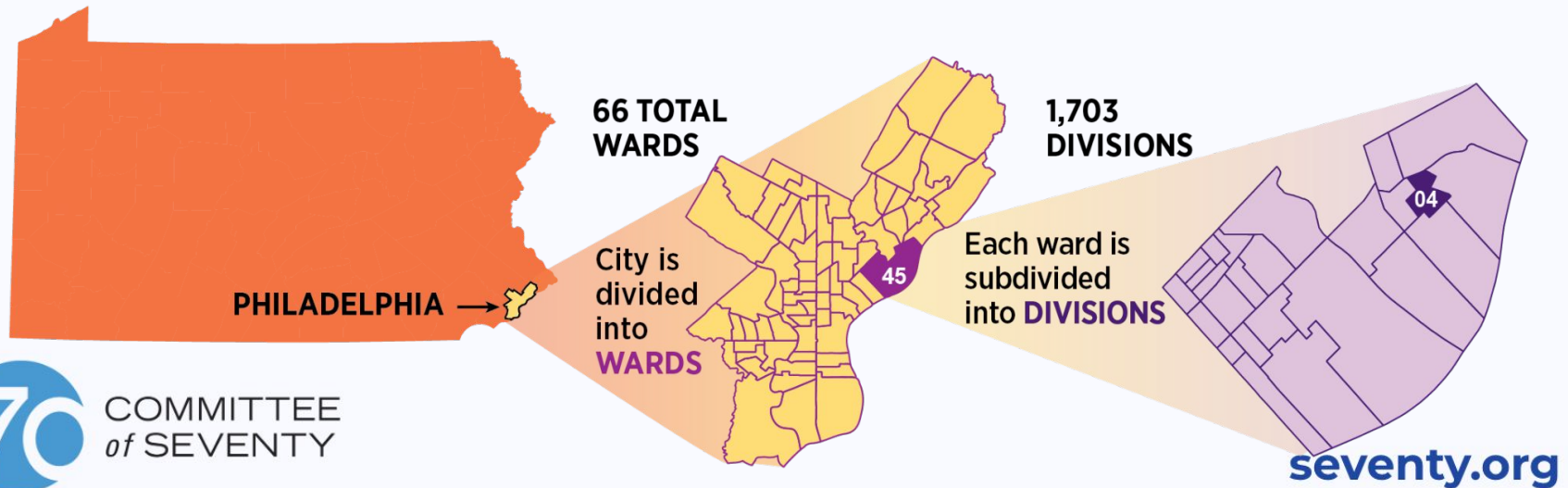
Casting a Ballot In Pennsylvania

Voters can **choose** to vote either in person or by mail

Both options have **safeguards** to ensure voters are **eligible and that their votes are counted accurately** .

Voting in person

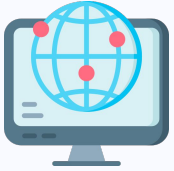
- Elected and appointed poll workers staff each polling place in Pennsylvania.
- They confirm voters identification through a signature match or ID in the case of first time voters.



Mail Ballots



Applying to Vote by Mail:



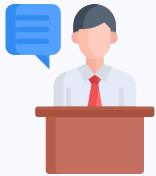
ONLINE:

Visit vote.pa.gov to apply for your mail ballot using the Pennsylvania Department of State's online application portal.



BY MAIL:

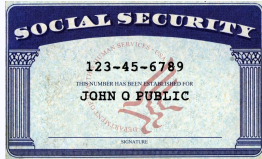
Visit vote.phila.gov/votebymail to download and print an application. Once completed, mail to:
Philadelphia County Board of Elections,
City Hall Room 142, Philadelphia, PA 19107



PERSON:

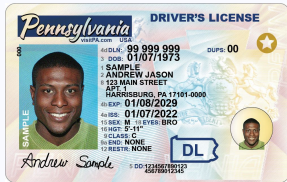
Visit one of our **Satellite Election Offices, or City Hall Room 142**. You can get registered to vote, and apply for, complete, and return your mail ballot all in one visit!

Identification for Vote by Mail



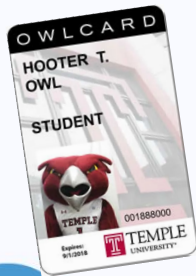
OPTION 1:

If the voter has not been issued a Pennsylvania driver's license nor a PennDOT ID, the last four digits of the person's **Social Security Number** must be provided.



OPTION 2

If the voter has a **valid and unexpired Pennsylvania driver's license** or a valid and unexpired **PennDOT ID card**, the license/ID number must be provided.



OPTION 3:

A person who has not been issued a current and valid driver's license, a current and valid PennDOT ID, or a Social Security Number must provide a copy of a photo ID document.

Mail Ballot Collection

Mail ballots can be returned:

- By mail, via USPS
- At County Election Offices, or
- At ballot drop boxes, if available



Philadelphia City Commissioners

Satellite Election Offices

10 Convenient Locations

Satellite Election Offices
Location info: vote.phila.gov/seos

Hours of Operation:
Mon-Fri: 9 A.M. - 5 P.M.

vote.phila.gov

7:00 A.M. Election Day

An **Envelope Review** is the first step in processing mail ballots. Staff examine the outer envelope to confirm that it meets the basic legal requirements to be opened and counted.

Key Takeaways:

- Machine sorts ballots down to the division level
- Each tray is tracked with a batch control form
- Envelopes reviewed to confirm required information is complete
- Signature must be present and reasonably consistent with the voter's name
- Ballots with questions are set aside for further review



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Preliminary Checks

Every returned envelope is scanned, recorded, and sorted so the system knows it was received — even before it can be opened.

- Envelopes run through automated sorter
- Date-stamped upon receipt
- Barcode scanned to update SURE mail ballot tracking as “received”
- Sorted by ward and division
- Potential deficiencies flagged
- **Stored securely until 7:00 A.M. on Election Day**

The Life Cycle of a Mail in Ballot



Envelope
Review

Pennsylvania's 7:00 A.M. Rule:

In many states, election officials can begin opening mail ballots prior to Election Day.
In Pennsylvania, we cannot.

Key Takeaways:

- No **pre-canvassing** of mail ballots
- Processing mail ballots begins at 7:00 A.M. on Election Day, when polls open



Polls close at 8 P.M. (no matter the method)

Until 8:00 P.M., mail ballots can be returned on Election Day.

Drop boxes are locked at 8:00 P.M., and ballots are transported to the warehouse. These ballots are securely stored and verified before counting.

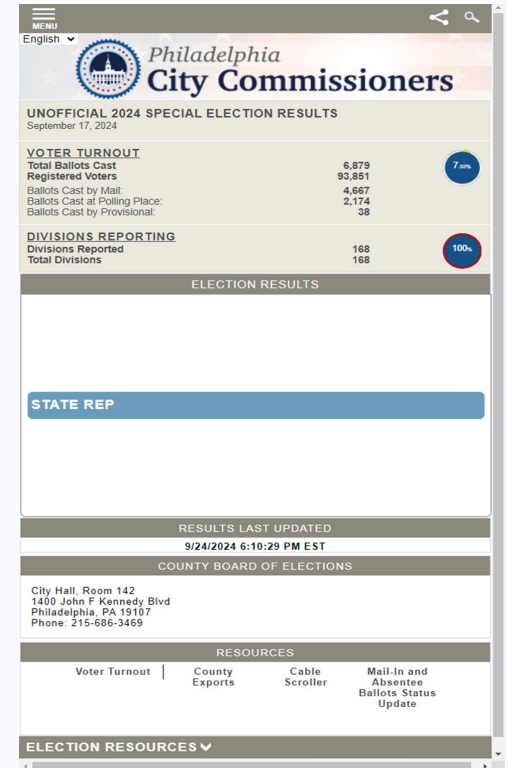


Counting and Reporting

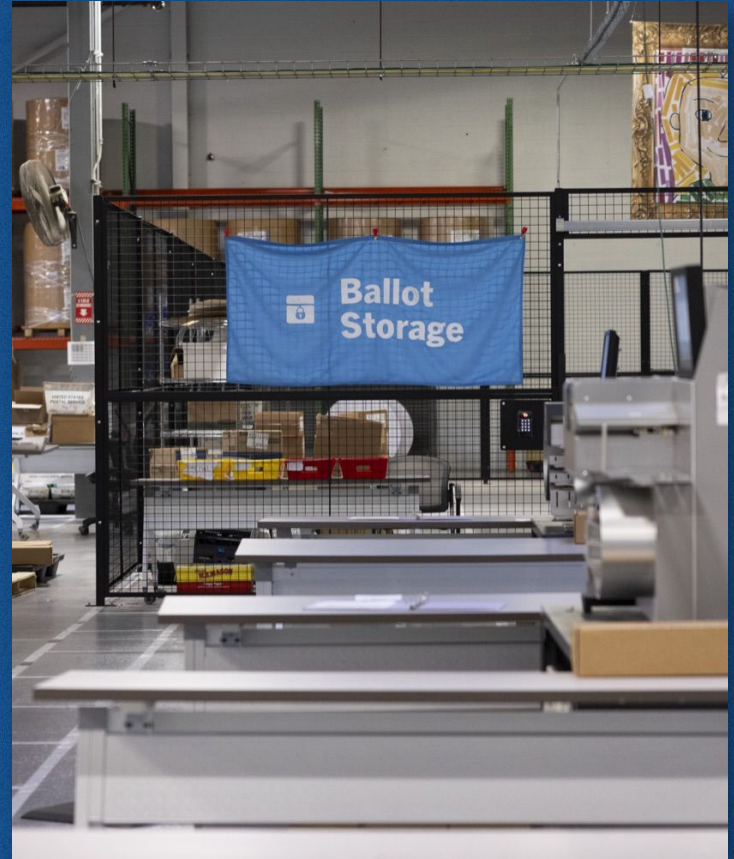
We begin reporting results shortly after polls close at **8:00 P.M. on Election Day.**

Results from polling places and mail ballots are reported as materials arrive at the election warehouse.

Results for all vote types are continuously updated as ballots are counted and tabulated.

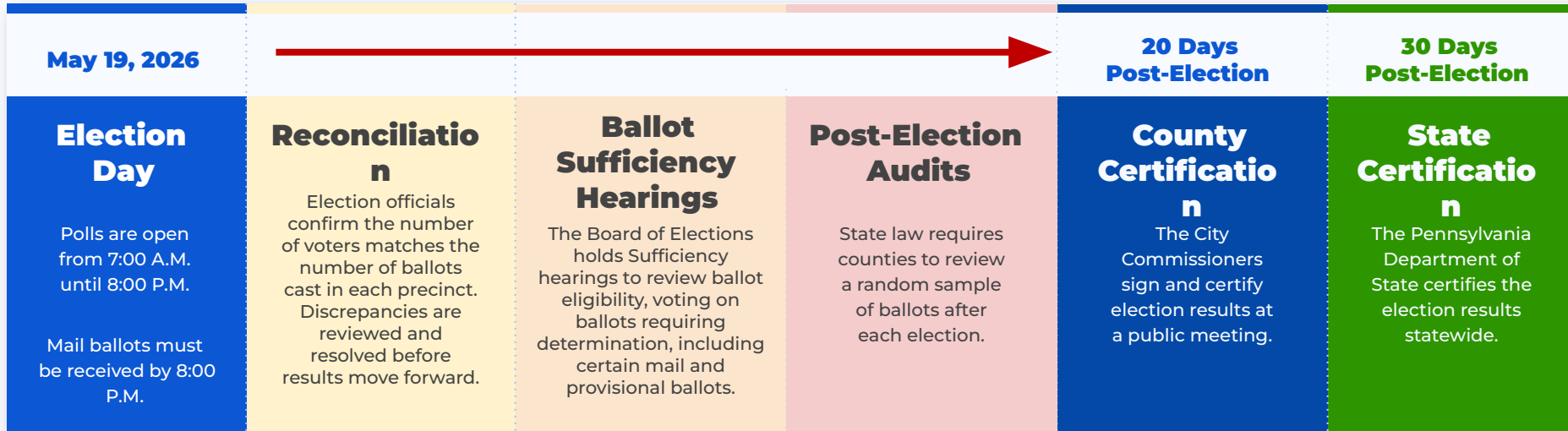


After Polls Close: Post-Election Processing



Certification of Results

After ballots are counted, and post-election procedures are completed, the Board of Elections reviews and certifies the official election results.



Certification of Results

May 19, 2026

Election Day

Polls are open from 7:00 A.M. until 8:00 P.M.

Mail ballots must be received by 8:00 P.M.

Reconciliation

Election officials confirm the number of voters matched the number of ballots cast in each precinct. Discrepancies are reviewed and resolved before results move forward.

Ballot Sufficiency Hearings

The Board of Election holds public hearings to determine ballot eligibility, including determining if ballots are valid and provisions.

Post-Election

State counting a range of ballots from each precinct.

20 Days Post-Election

Court Certification

The Commonwealth Commission sign and election results a public record.

30 Days Post-Election

State Certification

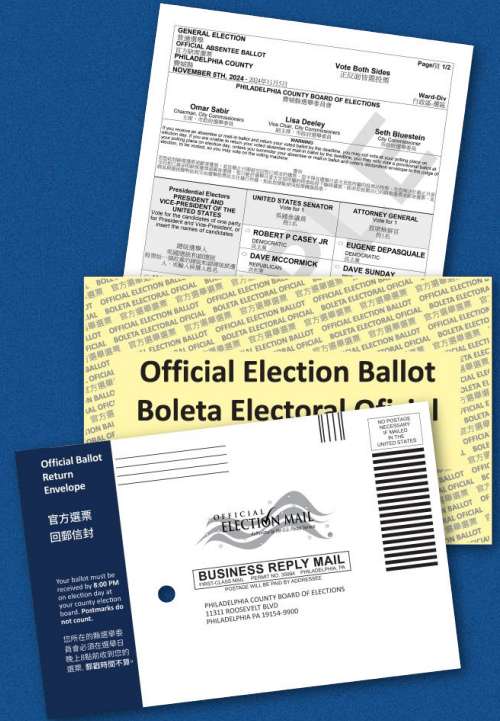
The Pennsylvania Department of State certifies the election results statewide.



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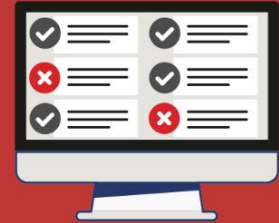
How we keep Pennsylvania elections safe and secure



Lists and Equipment

VOTER LIST MAINTENANCE

As required by federal and state law, counties are required to conduct voter list maintenance every year to ensure out-of-date registrations are removed from the voter rolls.



VOTING EQUIPMENT IS CERTIFIED

Federal and state experts test, examine and certify all voting equipment as secure. Before deployment by counties, all equipment must be certified by the U.S. Election Assistance Commission and the PA Department of State.



PA Department
of State

COUNTIES SAFELY STORE VOTING EQUIPMENT

Election management systems, voting machines and ballots are all stored in locked and secure facilities that can be accessed only by authorized personnel.



Equipment and materials

TESTING

Before voting begins each election, voting machines and tabulators must successfully pass logic and accuracy testing to ensure they work properly and have not been tampered with or manipulated.

Voters in all Pennsylvania counties utilize either hand-marked paper ballots or ballot-marking devices that allow them to review and verify their votes.

The voter-verifiable paper trail is also used for post-election audits and recounts.



No county voting machines or tabulators are ever connected to the internet.



BALLOTS STAY SECURE

Mail and absentee ballot voters can track the status of their ballot online or by contacting their local election office.

vote.pa.gov/mailballotstatus

To vote by mail, a ballot **MUST** be requested by a registered voter. Pennsylvania does not automatically send mail ballots to all voters. Voter identification and a signature are required on the application.



After completing a mail or absentee ballot, a voter must then complete and sign a declaration on the outer return envelope, which provides another layer of review and security. This envelope has a unique barcode tied to the individual registered voter. Unless the ballot is returned in this envelope and signed by the voter, it will not be counted.



Audits and Oversight

AUDITS ENSURE ACCURACY

Counties go through a process during the official canvass to reconcile ballots cast with the number of voters in each precinct.

Pennsylvania law requires every county to conduct post-election audits.

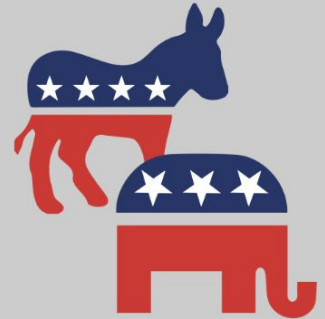


BIPARTISAN OVERSIGHT

Each of Pennsylvania's 67 county Boards of Elections are bipartisan with representatives from both the Democratic and Republican parties.

Pennsylvania law requires that all precincts be staffed by a bipartisan group of poll workers.

All candidates and parties are entitled to have certified watchers in every polling place and authorized observers at the central counting location.



Important Dates for Voters:



**Monday,
May 4, 2026:**

Last day to **REGISTER**
to vote in the
2026 Primary Election.



**Tuesday,
May 12, 2026:**

Last day to **APPLY** for a
mail-in or absentee ballot.

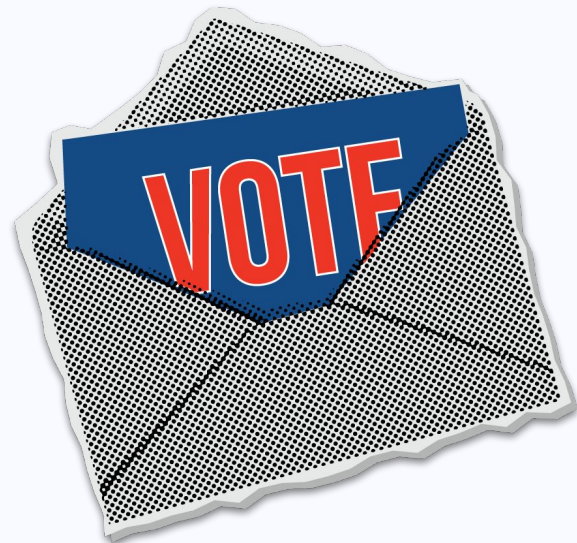


**Tuesday,
May 19, 2026:**

ELECTION DAY!
& Mail ballot return deadline.
Ballots must be received by 8:00 P.M.

Keep the momentum going!

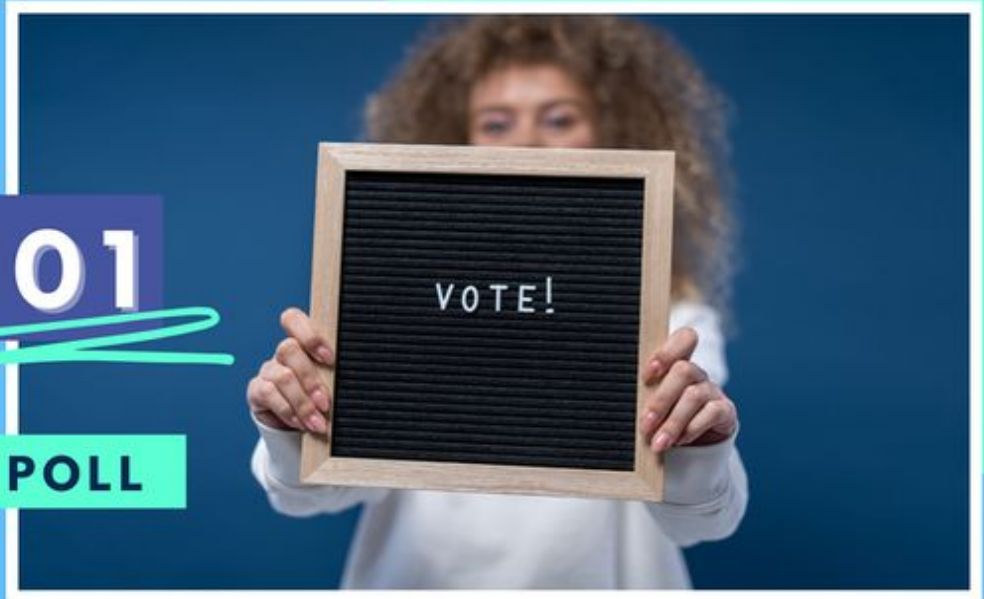
- **Talk to people about voting**
 - “Rule of Threes”:
 - Ask **three people** if they’re registered to vote
 - Help them get registered, remind them that Election Day is Tuesday, May 19th
 - Encourage them to talk to three friends!
- **Volunteer for a voter registration drive**
- **Write a letter to your community newsletter encouraging people to vote**
- **Share what you learned about voter registration on social media**



Want to do more? It's not too late!

INFO SESSION
**POLL
WORKER 101**

**SO YOU WANT TO BE A POLL
WORKER?**



Section 4: Helping Other Voters



Designated Agent Form

For voters with disabilities who need help picking up or returning mail voting materials



Pennsylvania
Department of State

VOTER, complete this section

Enter the address where you are registered to vote.

You may wish to keep a copy of this form (a photo on a phone is OK).

Give the completed form to your designated agent. **Do not** put the form in the yellow secrecy envelope with your completed ballot.

First name _____ Middle name/initial _____
Last name _____ Suffix _____
Address _____
City/Town _____ State _____ Zip _____
County _____

Designated agent's name _____

I have a disability and require assistance with voting by mail. I authorize my designated agent to pick up and return my absentee or mail-in ballot materials. I understand that false statements are punishable under 18 Pa. C.S. § 4904.

If I am unable to sign without help because I have a disability, I have made my mark or somebody has helped me make my mark.

VOTER SIGNATURE _____

Today's Date _____

DESIGNATED AGENT, complete this section

After you complete this form, consider making a copy of it for the voter (a photo on a phone is OK).

You must have the completed form with you when picking up or returning a ballot or other voting materials.

Do not put this form in the yellow secrecy envelope that contains the completed ballot.

First name _____ Middle name/initial _____
Last name _____ Suffix _____
Address _____
City/Town _____ State _____ Zip _____
Voter's name _____

I agree to serve as the designated agent for the voter named above. The voter has authorized me to pick up or return their absentee or mail-in ballot materials. I affirm that I have not marked or changed any of the voter's absentee or mail-in ballot materials, unless the voter directed and authorized me to do so. I understand that false statements are punishable under 18 Pa. C.S. § 4904.

DESIGNATED AGENT SIGNATURE _____

Today's Date _____

Q&A

