WHO CAN VOTE?

Can I vote in Rhode Island?
To vote in a Rhode Island election, you must be registered at least 30 days before the election. You can vote in a Rhode Island election if you are:
- A U.S. citizen
- At least 18 years old on Election Day
- A Rhode Island resident
- Not currently incarcerated for a felony
- Not legally declared mentally incompetent to vote by a court
- Registered to vote

What if I'm a student?
You can vote if you are a student, as long as you meet the above criteria. You can register to vote at whatever address you consider your primary legal residence. This can be your school address or your home address.

What if I've been convicted of a crime?
If you were convicted of a misdemeanor, you can vote. If you're incarcerated for a misdemeanor, you'll have to vote by absentee ballot. If you were convicted of a felony, you can vote unless you're currently incarcerated for your felony offense. If you're on parole or probation, you can vote at the polls.

What if I'm homeless?
Yes, you can vote if you are currently homeless. You don't need a permanent address to register to vote, but you do have to identify a place of residence (which can be a street corner, a shelter, or another place where you usually stay). You can also use the address of the Board of Canvassers in the town where you usually stay.

What if I've moved or changed my name?
Update your registration every time you move or change your name.
- If you have moved since June 11, 2018 and updated your driver’s license or state ID through the DMV, your information should have been automatically updated, but it’s a good idea to confirm your registration status online at http://vote.sos.ri.gov or by calling your local Board of Canvassers.
- If you moved to a new voting district (precinct) within your city or town on or before the 30 day advance registration deadline and didn’t re-register: vote at your Board of Canvassers or the polling place for your new address.
- If you moved to a new voting district (precinct) within your city or town after the deadline: vote at your Board of Canvassers or the polling place for your old address.
- If you moved to a new city or town within RI between six months and 30 days before the election and didn’t re-register, you can only vote at the Board of Canvassers of your old city or town. You will only be allowed to vote in federal and statewide races.
- If you moved to a new city or town within the state after the registration deadline, you can still vote at your old polling place in your old city or town.
- If you moved to Rhode Island from another state and didn’t register before the deadline, you cannot vote.

REGISTRATION

DEADLINES:
Primary election: register by Monday, August 13, 2018.

How do I know if I'm registered?
Check your registration status at http://vote.sos.ri.gov or by calling your local Board of Canvassers.

You can register to vote:
- In person by filling out a voter registration form at your local Board of Canvassers, located in your city or town hall
- In person when you apply for services at state agencies that provide public assistance or services for people with disabilities
- At armed forces recruitment offices
- At some state and federal offices and agencies
- By filling out a voter registration form and mailing it to your local Board of Canvassers or the state Board of Elections
- Online at http://vote.sos.ri.gov

Unless you choose otherwise, you should be automatically registered to vote (if eligible) when you apply for a driver’s license or state ID at the DMV, but it’s a good idea to confirm your registration status online at http://vote.sos.ri.gov or by calling your local Board of Canvassers.

VOTING EARLY

Can I vote before Election Day?
Probably. You can vote early by mail if for any reason you might not be able to vote at your polling place on Election Day, including if it would be physically difficult for you. You can get an application for a mail (absentee) ballot at your local Board of Canvassers or at http://vote.sos.ri.gov/ovr/voters/vote_by_mail. Your completed application must be received by your local Board of Canvassers by 4 p.m., 21 days before the election: Tuesday, October 16, 2018, for the general election. If something happens after the deadline that will prevent you from voting at the polls, you may be eligible for an emergency mail ballot. For more info, contact your local Board of Canvassers or visit: http://vote.sos.ri.gov/ovr/voters/emergency_ballot.

What's the deadline for returning my mail (absentee) ballot?
Your mail ballot must be received by the state Board of Elections by 8 p.m. on the day of the election.

VOTING ON ELECTION DAY

When are the polls open?
Polls are generally open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. (except in New Shoreham, where polls open at 9 a.m.). During primary elections, polls open in Jamestown at 8 a.m., and in Hopkinton, Little Compton, and Westerly at 9 a.m. You have the right to vote if you’re in line when the polls close, even if the line is outside of the building.

Can I get time off from work to vote?
Maybe. The law doesn’t require employers to give employees paid or unpaid time off from work to vote, but your employer might have a policy allowing you to do so.

Where do I vote?
You have to vote at your assigned polling place, which is listed on the voter registration card you receive in the mail after you register. However, the polling location on that card is subject to change, so it’s worth confirming prior to voting. Polling place locations will be published in a local newspaper before the general election. For up-to-date information, call your local Board of Canvassers or look up your polling place at http://vote.sos.ri.gov.

What if I have a disability and my polling place is not accessible or I need additional assistance?
You have the right to an accessible polling place and an accessible voting machine. If you find out your polling place is inaccessible before Election Day, call your local Board of Canvassers right away and ask for an alternative method of voting, such as an emergency mail ballot or reassignment to an accessible polling place. If you find your polling place inaccessible on election day, contact the RI Disability Law Center at (401) 831-3150. If you are visually impaired or have a disability that prevents you from marking a ballot, your polling place has a special voting terminal for you to use. Ask your poll worker about the Automark. If you need a Braille or tactile ballot, you must ask for one in advance. The deadline for a Braille or tactile ballot for the general election is Monday, September 24, 2018. On Election Day, you can bring one or more people to assist you. This can be anyone you choose as long as the person is not your employer, an agent of your employer, or an officer or agent of your labor union. You will need to fill out an affidavit at the polling place.

What if I need language assistance?
You have the right to bring an interpreter with you to the polls or get assistance in your language from anyone you choose, including a poll worker, as long as the person is not your employer, an agent of your employer, or an officer or agent of your labor union. If you vote in Providence, Central Falls or Pawtucket, you have the right
to assistance in Spanish from a designated poll worker, and are entitled to a Spanish translation of the ballot and other election materials.

What if I need help in the voting booth?
If you need help because of a physical disability or because you can’t read the ballot, tell a poll worker when you get to your polling place. You can have someone, including the poll worker, assist you in the booth. If you need instructions on how to use the voting equipment, ask a poll worker. They are required to help you at any time you ask.

Can I take election materials with me into my polling place?
Yes, as long as they’re for your own use. Examples include a sample ballot, a voter guide, or this brochure. If you leave immediately after voting, you can also wear political buttons or clothing in the polling place. But you’re not allowed to distribute campaign materials within 50 feet of your polling place.

Can I bring my children with me?
Yes. State law permits you to bring a child under the age of 18 into the voting booth with you.

VOTER ID
Do I have to show ID?
Rhode Island law requires you to show photo ID in order to vote by regular ballot at the polls. However, if you do not have photo ID and want to vote at the polls, you cannot be turned away, and must instead be given a provisional ballot. Accepted forms of ID must have a photograph and cannot be expired, but they do not need to include your current address:
- RI driver’s license or permit
- RI voter ID card
- State or federal ID card
- U.S. passport
- U.S. military ID card
- ID issued by any federally recognized tribal government
- Student ID card from an educational institution located within the U.S.
- Government-issued medical card

What if I don’t have any ID?
- If you believe you are registered to vote and don’t have acceptable ID, you can’t be denied the right to vote. You have the right to cast a provisional ballot and should be given one. Your ballot will be counted if the signature you provide matches the one on your voter registration.
- If you are not offered a provisional ballot, ask to speak with the person in charge at your polling place. If you are still not given a provisional ballot, contact your local Board of Canvassers, the State Board of Elections, or the Secretary of State.
- If you have time and have ID at home or work, it’s usually better to get your ID and return to the polls to cast a regular ballot.
- For more information on obtaining a free voter ID, visit http://vote.sos.ri.gov/assets/pdfs/voter_id_information.pdf

PROBLEMS AT THE POLLS

What if I’m not on the voter list?
Ask a poll worker to check the list again and confirm that you’re at the right polling place. If you believe you’re at the right polling place but your name isn’t on the list, you have a right to cast a provisional ballot as long as you’re willing to swear that you believe you are registered to vote.

What if I go to the wrong polling place?
Ask a poll worker to help you find the right polling place. You can also call your local Board of Canvassers, or look up your polling place at http://vote.sos.ri.gov. If nobody can determine where you’re registered or you don’t have time to go to the correct polling place, you can cast a provisional ballot. However, if you cast your provisional ballot at the wrong polling place, only your votes for federal office will be counted.

What if someone challenges my right to vote?
Ask for a provisional ballot. You have the right to cast a provisional ballot even if you’ve been challenged.

What if someone tries to intimidate or harass me?
Tell a poll worker right away. If the poll worker is the problem, tell a poll watcher, call your local Board of Canvassers or one of the election hotline numbers listed below. You also have the right to electronically record polling place activities, as long as it is done outside the designated voting area and does not hinder the election process.

What if I make a mistake on my ballot or the voting machine malfunctions?
Tell a poll worker BEFORE you cast your vote. You have the right to a replacement ballot if you catch the error before you cast your ballot. If you haven’t properly filled out the ballot and the voting machine rejects it, you have the right to a replacement ballot. If your voting machine malfunctions, you can request a different machine or a paper ballot.

How do I make a complaint?
Ask the person in charge at your polling place. Candidates, political parties, and nonprofit groups may also have poll watchers at your polling place. If any of these people can’t resolve your complaint, call your local Board of Canvassers, or:
- RI Secretary of State Elections Division: (401) 222-2340
- State Board of Elections: (401) 222-2345
- ACLU of Rhode Island: (401) 831-7171
- RI Disability Law Center: (401) 831-3150

For more information, visit www.riaclu.org.