

## Should I Join a Political Party?

Political parties are for voters who share similar views on many issues and want to work together on the local, state and national levels. Joining a party does not obligate you to vote for that party's endorsed candidates.

Joining a party enables you to:

- vote in primaries.
- participate at the local level by volunteering for campaign work and serving on your party's town committee. Town committees get to talk to potential candidates; nominate and endorse candidates for municipal offices, boards, and commissions; and choose delegates to party conventions.
- participate at the state and national levels as an elected delegate to your party's conventions.

To join a political party, you must designate a party affiliation either when you register or any time thereafter. You can drop or change your party affiliation by using a mail-in registration card to notify your registrar of voters.

If you switch parties, your new party privileges become effective after 3 months. If you've been unaffiliated for at least three months, and you switch from unaffiliated to any party, your new party privileges become effective immediately; if you've been unaffiliated for less than three months, your switch becomes effective at the end of the third month.

A list of major and minor parties in Connecticut is available from the Office of the Secretary of the State.

## For More Information:

Addresses and phone numbers for your town's registrars of voters and town clerk are listed in the government pages of your local phone book and on your town's website. Your town clerk can provide the names of political party chairs of local town committees.

The following organizations may provide helpful information about voter registration and elections through their websites.

- League of Women Voters of CT ([www.lwvct.org](http://www.lwvct.org))
  - Directory of Elected Officials
  - General information on voting, candidates, and state government
  - Links to local Leagues
- State of Connecticut ([www.ct.gov](http://www.ct.gov))
  - Executive, judicial, legislative branches of state government
  - State Capitol information
  - Infoline
- CT General Assembly ([www.cga.ct.gov](http://www.cga.ct.gov))
  - Proposed legislation and calendar
  - Contact information for legislators
  - Dates of public hearings and meetings
- Secretary of the State ([www.sots.ct.gov](http://www.sots.ct.gov))  
Office of the Secretary of the State  
Legislation and Elections Administration  
Division (LEAD)  
30 Trinity Street  
Hartford, CT 06106  
Phone: (860) 509-6100; 1-800-540-3764  
TDD: (860) 509-6191; 1-800-303-3161  
Fax: (860) 509-6127
  - Election information
  - Online voter registration forms
  - Absentee ballot applications

## What is the League of Women Voters?

Founded in 1920, the League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

League members are men and women of every age, race, background, and political perspective. They believe that informed citizens are essential to effective government in a democracy.

The League of Women Voters of Connecticut Education Fund, Inc., founded in 1974, is a non-profit corporation recognized as a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization by the Internal Revenue Service.

**For more information on the League of Women Voters of CT and the League of Women Voters of CT Education Fund, for voters' guides before elections, or to locate a local League in your area:**

Phone: (203) 288-7996  
Fax: (203) 288-7998  
E-mail: [lwvct@lwvct.org](mailto:lwvct@lwvct.org)  
Website: [www.lwvct.org](http://www.lwvct.org)

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# Registering and Voting In Connecticut



League of Women Voters  
of Connecticut  
Education Fund, Inc.

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[www.lwvct.org](http://www.lwvct.org)

## Who May Register To Vote in Connecticut?

In Connecticut, you must complete a voter registration form to become eligible to vote in federal, state, and local elections. (In presidential elections, non-registered U.S. citizens may vote for President/Vice President using a Presidential Ballot available from their town clerk.)

■ Any U.S. citizen who is a Connecticut resident and will be 18 years old on or before Election Day may register to vote.

■ Any 17-year-old who will be 18 years old on or before Election Day and who otherwise meets the qualifications of an elector may register and vote in a primary.

■ If you have been convicted of a felony but have been released from confinement, probation and/or parole, you can consult the registrar of voters in the town where you live for more information about registering to vote or restoring your voting rights.

## Where and When May I Register to Vote?

You may register to vote as soon as you become a resident of any Connecticut town or city; there is no waiting period. However, there are deadlines to enable election officials to prepare voter lists.

You may get a voter registration form at any town/city hall in Connecticut, at libraries, the Department of Motor Vehicles, other state agency offices, or on the Internet: [www.sots.ct.gov](http://www.sots.ct.gov). Mail or hand in your form to the registrar of voters of the town or city where you reside.

If you are temporarily or permanently disabled, you may have a voter registration form mailed to you, or you may request your registrar of voters to come to your residence.

### ■ Election:

If you mail in your application, it must be postmarked or received by a voter registration agency by the 14<sup>th</sup> day before an election.

You may register in person at the registrar of voters' office in your town/city hall up to 7 days before an election.

Special exceptions exist for people who move, become citizens, or turn 18 after these deadlines.

### ■ Primary:

Your application must be postmarked or received by your registrar of voters, or by a voter registration agency, by the 5<sup>th</sup> day before a primary.

You may apply in person to your registrar until 12:00 noon on the last business day before a primary.

## Must I Ever Re-Register to Vote in Connecticut?

You must re-register when you move to a new town within Connecticut. Also, notify your registrars of voters if you change your name or if you move within a town, because your polling place may change.

## Where and When Do I Vote?

You are assigned to a specific polling place according to your address. Contact your local registrar, town clerk, or [www.Vote411.org](http://www.Vote411.org) for the location of your polling place.

State and national elections are held on the first Tuesday following the first Monday in November in even-numbered years. Municipal elections, held in odd-numbered years, are scheduled in November in most Connecticut towns. Some towns hold elections in May.

If you own property in a Connecticut city or town but are not registered to vote there, you may still be able to vote on certain local tax issues or for town budget votes in that town. Call your registrars for information.

Polls are open on Election Day for voting from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. Any person in line by 8 p.m. may vote. For voting on town referenda, such as local budget votes, polling locations and hours may vary. Call your registrars for details.

If you arrive at your polling place to vote in a federal election and find that you are not on the voting list, you may be able to complete a Provisional Ballot to vote. The election officials at the polls or in your town hall will have details.

## Who May Vote in a Primary?

A primary is a runoff between candidates within a political party for the nomination to represent it in the next general election.

The parties set their own rules and presently allow only party members to vote in a primary.

If you're listed as a registered voter with a party affiliation and will be 18 or older by the date of a given general election, you can vote in your party's primary preceding that election. You can check with your registrars of voters to find out if you're listed as a party member.

## How Do I Vote If I Can't Get to the Polls on Election Day?

If you are a registered voter, you may vote by absentee ballot if you are unable to vote in person because of:

- ▶ illness or physical disability
- ▶ active service in the armed forces of the US
- ▶ absence from town during all election hours
- ▶ religious beliefs forbidding secular activity on primary or Election Days
- ▶ service as an election official at a polling place other than your own.

An application for an absentee ballot is available from your town clerk or from the Secretary of the State's website at [www.sots.ct.gov](http://www.sots.ct.gov). Any voter already out of town or serving in the armed forces may request that an application be mailed. Allow enough time to receive and complete the application as well as to return the completed ballot by Election Day.

If you vote by absentee ballot, you will have to sign the inner return envelope that you fold the ballot into. You must not put your name or any other identifying information on the ballot itself. This is because voting by absentee ballot has privacy protections similar to voting by machine: your name cannot be connected to your vote when it is tallied. You sign the envelope to prove you voted; you leave the ballot unsigned to keep your vote private.

For emergency use of an absentee ballot, call your town clerk. A party-enrolled registered voter may request an absentee ballot application for a primary. Any registered voter may request one for a local referendum or for an election.