

## **Voter Guide: General Information**

### **Who can register to vote in Bergen County?**

You are eligible to register if:

1. You are a citizen of the United States.
2. You are a Bergen County resident 30 days before the election.
3. At least 17 years old, though you may not vote until you have reached the age of 18.
4. A person not serving a sentence of incarceration as the result of a conviction of any indictable offense under the laws of this or another state or of the United States.

### **How do I register to vote in Bergen County?**

You may register to vote by completing a registration application form at the Bergen County Superintendent of Elections office or by mail. Forms are also available at any Municipal Clerk's office, other public agency, or at our website, <http://www.co.bergen.nj.us/elections/default.html>. For further information, please call the Superintendent of Elections office at 201-336-6100 between the hours of 8:30AM and 4:30PM.

### **When can I register to vote?**

Anytime, however, in order to vote in any election, your registration must be received 21 days prior to the election in which you wish to vote.

### **How long is my registration valid?**

Your registration is valid indefinitely, if you have not moved from Bergen County or have not been disenfranchised. If you move from Bergen County, you must register to vote in your new county.

### **Must I declare a Party Affiliation when I register?**

1. No, choosing a political party is optional, unless you wish to vote in either party's primary election. Only party members may vote in the primary election. If you are an unaffiliated voter, voting in your first primary election, you must declare a party affiliation at the polls on primary election day. You will remain a member of that political party until you notify the Superintendent's office, in writing, otherwise. Voters are now permitted to return to unaffiliated status.
2. If you wish to change your affiliation prior to the primary election, you must do so, in writing, no later than 55 days preceding the primary election.

### **If I move, how do I change my address?**

1. Moving within Bergen County: If you move within Bergen County, you must file a written change of address with this office.
  - a. If you move from one election district to another in the SAME town or move from one town to another in Bergen County, before election day, and have not notified the Superintendent's office in writing of this change before the deadline date, you must go to your new polling location, in your new town or district and vote on a provisional ballot. You can call your municipal clerk or the Superintendent of Elections at 201-336-6100 to locate your new polling place.
2. Moving from/to another County: If you have moved to another county more than 21 days before an election, you must re-register to vote in your new county. If you have not re-registered, you cannot vote. Please contact the Superintendent of Elections office to check your status.
  - a. If you have moved to another county or state less than 30 days before an election, you may vote in your previous polling location for that election only.

If you have not met the registration deadline, you have the right to appeal by appearing before a Superior Court Judge on the day of the election. Contact your local Superintendent of Elections/Board of Elections office for more information.

### **What if I marry or change my name?**

1. If you legally change your name, you must complete a new voter registration form and mark the box Name Change.
2. If you have not changed your name with the Superintendent's office prior to the deadline, you can still vote, by filling out a provisional ballot, putting your previous and current name and signing with your new name.

### **I would prefer to register to vote using my business address. Can I do that?**

No, the law requires you to register to vote using the address of your domicile. Domicile is defined as where your habitation is fixed (i.e., where you physically reside).

### **My son just moved onto his college campus and wants to vote there. Can he do that?**

Yes. He should fill out a voter registration form for his new residence and notify this office of the change. If he wishes, he may remain registered at his permanent residence, such as your home, and request a mail-in ballot be sent to him. The decision where to register and vote is up to him, but he can only register and vote in one place.

### **I own two homes, where do I register from?**

You must register from the place where you actually reside. The words "actually resides", mean the voter is entitled to vote only from an address where they physically live; the place you intend to return to whenever you are gone from it.

### **I applied for a Mail-In Ballot but never received it, what do I do?**

1. Prior to the elections, you can contact the Election Division of the County Clerk at 201-336-7020 for information regarding its status.
2. On the day of the election, you can go to your polling place and if your name is marked "Mail-In Ballot," you must vote on a provisional ballot. If your name is not marked, you may vote in the machine.

### **What do I do if I receive a sample ballot at my home, for someone who no longer lives here?**

These ballots should be returned to the Superintendent of Elections Office with a brief note such as "return to sender" or "person has moved." Such returned ballots not only include previous home owners, but family members who no longer reside at that address as well.

A returned sample ballot alerts this office that the person may no longer live at that address, prompting an investigation as to where that voter resides.

## **My name was tagged/missing from the poll book. What do I do?**

1. If your name was tagged with "Affirmation of Residence," this means we received your sample ballot back as undeliverable. If you reside at the same address from where we have you registered, you must first complete an Affirmation of Residence Form which is located in the front of the poll book. You may then vote in the machine.
2. If your name was missing, you have the right to vote on a provisional ballot only.

## **I'm a school teacher and would like to give my students some hands-on involvement in the voting process. How can your office help me?**

The Superintendent and Deputy Superintendent of Elections run mock elections for grades three and up. Please contact this office in writing with: the date you wish to run the election, the number of students attending, the number of voting machines, what you want on the ballot, and what your overall goal is for the election.

This office also runs Student Council elections through our Voting Machine Warehouse division.

## **We are a Service Workers Union and would like to hold an election using voting machines. Can this be done?**

Yes. Our Voting Machine Warehouse will provide machines and assistance for a fee, for anyone wishing to run a private election (i.e. Unions, Police Organizations, etc.).

## **When are elections held in Bergen County?**

Primary Election- held on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in June.

General Election- held the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November.

Polls for the Primary and General are open from 6:00AM until 8:00PM.

## **Municipal Election Information**

Nonpartisan elections are held on the second Tuesday in May. In Bergen County, the following municipalities have nonpartisan elections: Garfield, Hackensack, Lodi, Lyndhurst, Mahwah, Ridgely Park, Ridgewood, Teaneck and Teterboro. Polls are open from 6:00AM until 8:00PM.

## **When are Annual School Elections held?**

Annual school elections are held the third Tuesday in April. They are non-partisan elections to elect members of the Boards of Educations and to approve the proposed school budgets. You must be a registered voter to vote in school board elections. The law states that polling hours may vary in each school district, but they must be open between the hours of 5:00pm and 9:00pm. Check your sample ballot for polling location and time.

## **Where do I vote?**

Voting locations are listed on your Sample Ballot or by checking the Bergen County Board of Elections Website at <http://www.co.bergen.nj.us/paboe/PollLocator.aspx>

## **How Do I Vote? How Do I Cast a Write in Vote? What Do I Do when I Get to the Polling Place?**

The Superintendent of Elections has created an instructional video which demonstrates the entire voting process, from when a voter enters until they exit the polling place. Please visit the below link to view (you will need Quicktime):

<http://www.co.bergen.nj.us/elections/Videos/BergenCtyVotingDemoQT.mov>

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### **ABOUT US**

The Superintendent of Elections and the Deputy Superintendent of Elections are appointed by the Governor of the State of New Jersey. The responsibilities of their office include:

- Voter Registration
  - Change of Residence
  - Issue Voter Acknowledgement Cards
  - Maintain Custody of Voting Machines
  - Maintain Custody of Poll Books
  - Inspection of Polling Places
  - Investigate all Voting Discrepancies
  - Enforce Elections Laws as per NJSA Tile 19
  - Conduct Mock Elections
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### **NEED MORE INFORMATION?**

Superintendent of Elections Patricia DiCostanzo and Deputy Superintendent Theresa O'Connor are available to answer any questions that any voter may have.

Contact:

*Superintendent of Elections Patricia DiCostanzo*

*Deputy Superintendent Theresa M. O'Connor*

County of Bergen

One Bergen County Plaza

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Hackensack, NJ 07601

Phone: 201-336-6100

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***It is up to each and every American citizen to exercise their right to vote. Each and every election is equally important.***