Student Voting Guide for Delaware

2014 Registration Deadlines and Election Dates

General Election Registration Deadline: 24 days prior to Election Day—October 11

General Election: November 4

Voter registration forms, polling place locations, and more information can be found at https://ivote.de.gov/

Register at School or Home?

Students have a choice about where to register to vote:

School residence:

- Students attending college in Delaware may register to vote at their school address if they presently intend to make it their residence and to return there after any temporary absence like summer vacation. They do not have to plan to reside at that address permanently or after graduation.

Home residence:

- Some students may choose to register or remain registered at their home (prior) address in Delaware or outside the state if they intend to return there after college. In this case, a student may need to vote by absentee ballot.
- Delaware residents who move away for college can keep their Delaware voting residency so long as they still consider Delaware the location of their primary residence and do not register or declare residency elsewhere. These students may request to vote absentee by mail.

For other state's registration information visit: www.campusvoteproject.org/studentguides

What Type of ID Do I Need to Register?

Delaware's voter registration form asks for your Delaware driver's license or ID number, or the last four digits of your Social Security Number. Failure to provide this information could lead to you having to show additional identification when you vote that shows your picture or your name and address. Make sure to provide this information on the registration form so the state can verify your identity and you don't run into problems when you cast your ballot.

What Type of ID Do I Need to Vote?

Students will need identification in order to vote, but they may sign an affirmation of identity if they do not bring ID to the polls. Acceptable ID includes a current valid photo ID, copy of current utility bill, bank statement, government check, paycheck or other government document that shows the voter's name and address.

Where Do I Vote?

- Polling place locator online at https://ivote.de.gov/
- Voters must cast their ballots in the correct precinct. Sometimes there are multiple precincts in one polling place, so confirm your precinct ahead of time and get in the correct line!

The Higher Education Act requires most colleges and universities to make a good faith effort to distribute voter registration forms to every student. Does yours?

How Can I Vote?

Absentee:

Delaware requires voters to have an excuse to vote absentee.

By Mail

- Delaware residents who want to remain registered in their home county and vote absentee may do so, as Delaware does allow absence from the county for school as an excuse under "occupation" for absentee voting. You must submit an affidavit for an absentee ballot no later than noon the day before the election. Ballots must be turned by the close of the polls on Election Day to Department of Elections for your county.
- Mail ballots are usually sent out 35 days prior to a Primary and 45 days prior to a General Election.

In Person

- Absentee votes may be cast in person at the Department of Elections for your county. Contact the Department of Elections for your county to find out the days and hours where in person absentee ballots will be available and make sure to bring proof of identity with you.
- In person absentee voting ends at 12 noon the day before Election Day.

On Election Day at the Polls

- Polls are open from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

According to the U.S. Supreme Court, students have the right to register and vote in their college towns if they meet the same requirements as everyone else. Misinformation, such as claims that registering to vote at school may jeopardize eligibility for financial aid or insurance, are sometimes used to discourage students from voting locally.

Common Questions

Will voting in Delaware affect my federal financial aid?

Where you register to vote will not affect federal financial aid such as Pell Grants and Perkins or Stafford loans or your dependency status regarding FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid).

Will I lose my scholarship if I register to vote in Delaware?

Generally, no. If you receive scholarship money from a state, county, town, or a private entity (i.e., an entity other than the federal government) you should confirm that residency in a particular place is not a requirement of the scholarship and/or that voter registration in Delaware will not affect your eligibility.

Will registering to vote in Delaware affect my driver's license or car registration?

No. Delaware does not require students who register to vote in the state to register their cars or change their driver's license.

What do residency and domicile mean?

Residency and domicile are legal terms the state uses to describe where you currently live and where you intend to remain for the foreseeable future.

Will registering to vote in Delaware prevent my parents from claiming me as a dependent on their taxes?

No. Students are often told that registering to vote in a different state from their parents will make them lose their dependency status. This is not true. Where you register to vote will have no effect on your parent's tax status.

Does being an in-state or out-of-state student for tuition purposes affect my right to vote?

No. You may choose to vote in your college community or back home regardless of your tuition status.

This Guide was prepared by FELN staff who are not licensed to practice law in Delaware and FELN intends that the information contained herein is used only as a general guide. This document should not be used as a substitute for consultation with a licensed Delaware legal professional.

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