

Be A Voter

**2020 Voter
Registration
Guide**

vote.ri.gov



Dear engaged citizen:

Voting is fundamental to our democracy. Unfortunately, all too often the importance of this single act is ignored. It is imperative to engage everyone who is eligible to vote in the civic process. I commend you for volunteering your time to make sure that your peers are registered and ready to engage as voters.

This guide contains everything you will need to organize a voter registration drive including posters for you to distribute and post around your community. The guide also contains infographics on why voting matters, especially for the issues you care about. From education to taxation, your vote for leaders in local, state, and federal government matters. Every election matters!

The single act of casting a ballot is fundamental and how we make government accountable to the people it serves. I thank you again for being engaged and for working to engage others. Your efforts are truly what make our democracy thrive!

If you have any questions, please call our Elections Division at 401-222-2340 or contact us by email at elections@sos.ri.gov.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nellie M. Gorbea". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Nellie M. Gorbea
Rhode Island Secretary of State

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2020 Election Dates

Here are the important dates that every voter should know concerning the 2020 election cycle:

September 8 | Primary Day

JULY 27 Deadline to apply for a braille/
tactile ballot

AUG 09 Deadline to register
to vote

AUG 11 Disaffiliation deadline
*(to vote in a different
party primary)*

AUG 18 Deadline to apply for a mail
ballot

AUG 19 to **SEPT 8** Early In Person
Voting

SEPT 8 Election Day
Deadline to return mail
ballot

November 8 | General Election Day

SEPT 21 Deadline to apply for a braille/
tactile ballot

OCT 04 Deadline to register
to vote

OCT 13 Deadline to apply for a mail
ballot

OCT 14 to **NOV 2** Early In Person
Voting

NOV 3 Election Day
Deadline to return mail
ballot

* SAME DAY VOTER REGISTRATION

Same day voter registration on Election Day is available for the Presidential and Vice Presidential races only. Contact your local board of canvassers for more information.

Voter Registration Drive Set Up

Planning Your Voter Registration Drive

Before you host your voter registration drive, there are a few things you should do:

- ✓ **First, quickly investigate who is running for office** in the state and at the local level in your community. This information is easy to find online. Closer to election time, you can view a sample ballot at [vote.ri.gov](https://www.vote.ri.gov) by typing in the address where you are registered to vote.

Registrants might ask you about who is running and what they stand for when they register to vote. Don't forget to investigate candidates from all political parties; voter registration is a nonpartisan effort!

- ✓ **Next, consider where you want to host your voter registration drive.** Is there a high traffic spot where you can put your table? Do you have a main corridor or outdoor area where people hang out?
- ✓ **Finally, think about how long you want your voter registration drive to last.** By rotating volunteers, you can host the voter registration drive for a few hours spread out over a few days leading up to the voter registration deadline.

Gathering Materials

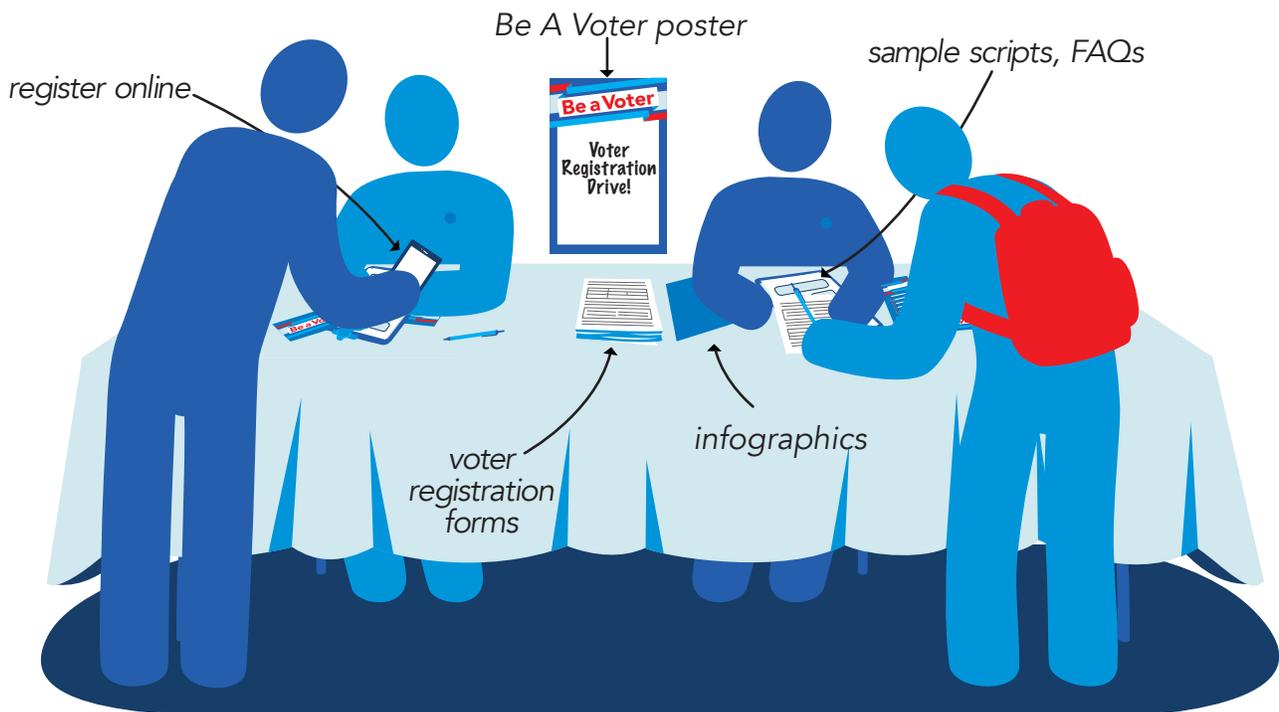
Although this toolkit provides you with many of the materials you need for a successful voter registration drive, you will also need a **long table, pens, and a few clipboards.**

In Rhode Island, eligible voters with a valid RI Driver's License or State ID can register to vote or update their voter registration online at **vote.ri.gov**. Bring a laptop, smart phone, or tablet if you can. (Don't forget the chargers!)



Setting Up Your Voter Registration Booth

Below is how your voter registration booth might look:



Promoting Your Voter Registration Drive



Social media is an easy way to promote your voter registration drive and recruit volunteers. You can create a

Facebook event for voter registration drives (visit <https://www.facebook.com/help/210413455658361> to learn how to create and invite friends to a Facebook event).

Share the details of your event on your Instagram stories, Snapchat stories, and on Twitter.

You can also promote your event through community newsletters and calendar listings. Below is a sample Media Advisory you can use to send to your local newspapers and radio stations the week before your event.

--MEDIA ADVISORY--

SUBJECT/HEADLINE: *Voter registration event scheduled at [Location]*

WHAT:

[ORGANIZATION NAME] will host a voter registration drive at [LOCATION NAME] as part of a non-partisan effort to ensure eligible Rhode Islanders are voter ready for the next election.

WHY:

The goal is to increase civic participation by encouraging Rhode Islanders to register to vote and come out to the polls this election season. ["Insert quote about why you are hosting this event."]

WHEN:

[Date and timeframe of event]

WHERE:

*[Address]
[City, State Zip Code]*

MEDIA CONTACT:

*[Your name]
[Your phone number and email]*

Training Volunteers

Recruiting Volunteers

Volunteers are essential for voter registration drives. If enough people do not volunteer after seeing your social media promotions, consider emailing other groups involved with politics or activism to join you in this nonpartisan effort to increase voter registration.

Besides registering voters, you will need volunteers to move and set up your table in the high traffic area you've identified.

Preparing to Train Volunteers

Before training volunteers, here are a few things you should do:

- ✓ Create one or two bullets about elections happening in Rhode Island. For example:

- There are __ candidates running for **Town Council** in our town.
- __ candidates are running to represent our **State Senate District**.

- ✓ Go to vote.ri.gov to familiarize yourself with the online voter registration process.
- ✓ Review the paper Voter Registration Form.
- ✓ Read briefly through the FAQs (pgs. 14-15) so you're ready to answer questions from volunteers. They should also have access to the FAQ section of this handbook while registering people.
- ✓ Have copies of:
 - **voter registration forms**
 - **sample scripts** (pg. 11-12)
 - **FAQs** (pg. 14-15)

Creating A Shifts Calendar

You will need two or three volunteers at the voter registration booth at all times and may want to set up a shifts calendar so that the event can last a few hours.

Here is a sample shifts calendar:

Time	Name	Duties
11:00am-12:30pm	Juan and Katie	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meet outside the cafeteria at 11:00am to bring a table outside on the lawn• Set up poster, rack cards, stickers and voter registration forms• Voter registration
12:30pm-2:00pm	Michael and Ayana B.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Voter registration
2:00pm-3:00pm	Maria and Camila	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Voter registration
3:30pm-5:00pm	Lauren and John	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Voter registration• Return table to the cafeteria at 4:45pm• Return materials and forms to Juan outside the cafeteria

Make sure that volunteers either arrive 15 minutes before their shift or at some other designated time and location for a quick lesson on voter registration.

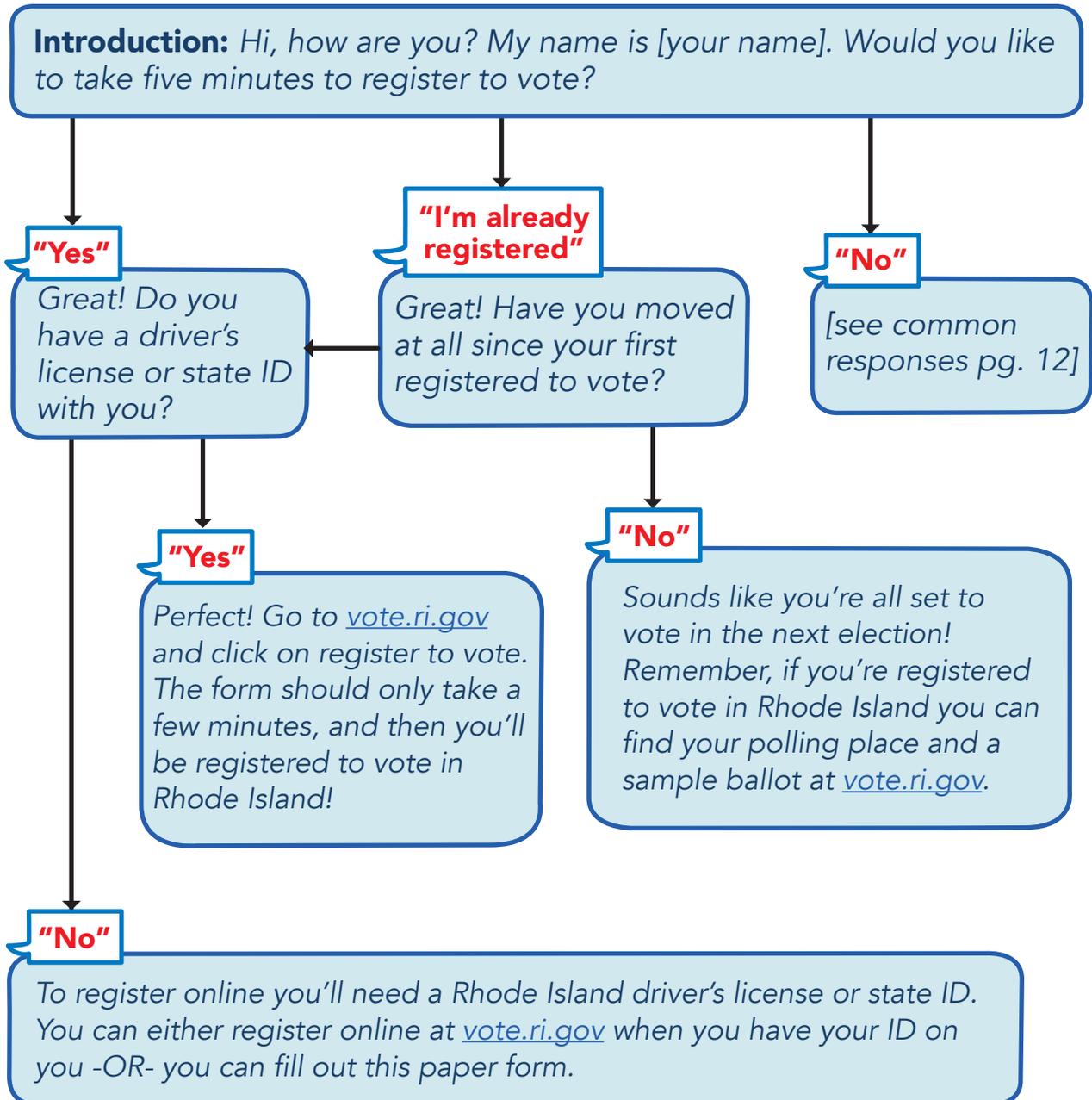
The Training

- 1 Quickly discuss your bullet points about the major elections and why voting matters. Remember, **voter registration drives are nonpartisan!** What matters is making sure new voters are prepared to vote on Election Day.
- 2 Have all volunteers pull up vote.ri.gov on their phones to follow along as you familiarize them with the voter registration process.
- 3 Walk the volunteers through online voter registration using the sample script (see pg. 11). Point out how it resembles the paper form.
- 4 Go over sample scripts and FAQ sheets. Be sure to roll play common scenarios and responses so volunteers are prepared for the actual event!
- 5 Review the shifts calendar and expectations for arrival.

Additional Tips for Volunteers

- 1 Ask volunteers to stay positive and be personable with people who approach the booth.
- 2 Make sure volunteers know that they can wave in a friendly manner at people passing by, but not to harass or bribe anyone into registering to vote.
- 3 Suggest that volunteers not read directly from the sample script when asking people to register, but instead familiarize themselves with the process of voter registration.

Sample Script



Common Responses

"I don't have time."

I understand that you are busy. Now in Rhode Island you can register to vote online in less than 10 minutes. All we need to start is a Rhode Island driver's license or State ID.

"I'm not interested" or "I don't vote."

I understand. I decided to vote because [insert your reason here]. Some examples of why people vote are:

- **Your vote still matters!** State and local elected leaders make important decisions about issues like health care, public safety, and job creation. Check out this infographic about how different levels of government impact your everyday life!
- **I care about** [insert an issue you care about here], and I want to make sure that the people passing laws in Rhode Island also care about [insert issue]. What issues are important to you?

"I don't know enough about politics."

I have felt that way before, too, but then I realized democracy depends on everyday people being part of the process. I also learned about vote.ri.gov where I was able to preview my sample ballot. After seeing who was running for office, I could Google them to see what they stand for. I definitely felt more prepared heading into Election Day and empowered to make my own decisions.

"I've never voted before, I wouldn't know what to do!"

I totally get it. If you have a minute, check out this cartoon which explains voting in Rhode Island. Here you can also take this handout which explains the options you have for voting. You can even vote from home in your pajamas by using a mail ballot.

"I can't register to vote. I'm not eligible."

May I ask why not? I have training on registering people to vote and may be able to answer questions.

- **Not a citizen:** I understand. You can still make a difference by making sure your friends and family members who are eligible are registered and vote this fall.
- **Have a felony conviction:** Actually, only those currently serving time in prison are not eligible to vote in Rhode Island.
- **Not old enough:** If you are 16 years old, you can pre-register to vote in Rhode Island.
- **Any other response:** I suggest calling the Secretary of State's office to see if they can answer that: 401.222.2340

Dos and Don'ts

Do	Don't
Make sure the form is complete and signed	Write additional information on the form
Offer a new form if mistakes are made	Suggest a political party. Voter registration drives are a nonpartisan effort!
Offer to take the form - or- point out the address of the registrants local board of canvassers	Leave forms unattended.
Return all completed forms to an elections official as quickly as possible. Remember: It takes 30 days from when a registration is submitted for that voter to be officially registered!	

FAQ's and Resources

Frequently asked questions about voter registration

Q: I just moved to college from my hometown in Rhode Island. Can I register to vote in my college's town?

A: Yes.

Q: I just moved to Rhode Island, can I still register to vote here?

A: Yes. You will need to be registered to vote 30 days prior to the election.

Q: I thought Rhode Island passed Automatic Voter Registration. Aren't I automatically registered then?

A: Maybe! Automatic Voter Registration works for people who interact with the DMV . Have you renewed your license or registration since June 2018? If so, let's check vote.ri.gov to make sure your voter information is up to date.

Q: I'm a student living in Rhode Island. Will changing where I register to vote or registering for the first time affect my financial aid packet?

A: Some states do require a student to be a resident of their home state in order to get financial aid. It's a good idea to check with your home state if registering to vote in another state would change your residency.

Q: Do I have to register as a democrat or republican?

A: No, you can register as an unaffiliated voter.

Q: Is it too late to register to vote?

A: To vote in any election, you must register 30 days before that election.

Q: I was convicted of a felony, but have served my time and am on probation. Can I register to vote?

A: Yes. If you were previously registered to vote in Rhode Island, your voter registration will automatically be restored. If not, we can still register you today.

Helpful Links

 vote.ri.gov

 rivotes.org

 <http://www.elections.state.ri.us/faq/>

To download a voter registration form:

https://vote.sos.ri.gov/assets/pdfs/voter_registration_form.pdf

To view forms of acceptable IDs for voting:

<http://www.elections.state.ri.us/voting/id.php>

To learn how to create a Facebook event:

<https://www.facebook.com/help/210413455658361>

Local Board of Canvassers

City or Town	Address	Phone #
Barrington Town Hall	283 County Rd. 02806	247-1900 x4
Bristol Town Hall	10 Court St. 02809	253-7000
Burrillville Town Hall	105 Harrisville Main St., Harrisville 02830	568-4300
Central Falls City Hall	580 Broad St. 02863	727-7450
Charlestown Town Hall	4540 South County Trl. 02813	364-1200
Coventry Town Hall	1670 Flat River Rd. 02816	822-9150
Cranston City Hall	869 Park Ave. 02910	780-3126
Cumberland Town Hall	45 Broad St. 02864	728-2400
East Greenwich Town Hall	125 Main St., P.O. Box 111 02818	886-8603
East Providence City Hall	145 Taunton Ave. 02914	435-7502
Exeter Town Hall	675 Ten Rod Rd. 02822	294-2287
Foster Town Hall	181 Howard Hill Rd. 02825	392-9201
Glocester Town Hall	1145 Putnam Pike, P.O. Box B 02814	568-6206 x0
Hopkinton Town Hall	1 Town House Rd. 02833	377-7777
Jamestown Town Hall	93 Narragansett Ave. 02835	423-9804
Johnston Town Hall	1385 Hartford Ave. 02919	553-8856
Lincoln Town Hall	100 Old River Rd., P.O. Box 100 02865	333-1140
Little Compton Town Hall	40 Commons P.O. Box 226 02837	635-4400
Middletown Town Hall	350 East Main Rd. 02842	849-5540
Narragansett Town Hall	25 Fifth Ave. 02882	782-0625
Newport City Hall	43 Broadway 02840	845-5386
New Shoreham Town Hall	16 Old Town Rd., P.O. Box 220 02807	466-3200
North Kingstown Town Hall	100 Fairway Dr. 02852	294-3331 x128
North Providence Town Hall	2000 Smith St. 02911	232-0900 x234
North Smithfield Municipal Annex	575 Smithfield Rd. 02896	767-2200
Pawtucket City Hall	137 Roosevelt Ave. 02860	722-1637

City or Town	Address	Phone #
Portsmouth Town Hall	2200 East Main Rd. 02871	683-3157
Providence City Hall	25 Dorrance St., Room 102 02903	421-0495
Richmond Town Hall	5 Richmond Townhouse Rd., Wyoming 02898	539-9000 x9
Scituate Town Hall	195 Danielson Pike, P.O. Box 328, North Scituate 02857	647-7466
Smithfield Town Hall	64 Farnum Pike, Esmond 02917	233-1000 x116
South Kingstown Town Hall	180 High St., Wakefield 02879	789-9331 x1231
Tiverton Town Hall	343 Highland Rd. 02878	625-6703
Warren Town Hall	514 Main St. 02885	245-7340 x4
Warwick City Hall	3275 Post Rd. 02886	738-2010
West Greenwich Town Hall	280 Victory Hwy. 02817	392-3800
West Warwick Town Hall	1170 Main St. 02893	822-9201
Westerly Town Hall	45 Broad St. 02891	348-2503
Woonsocket City Hall	169 Main St., P.O. Box B 02895	767-9221

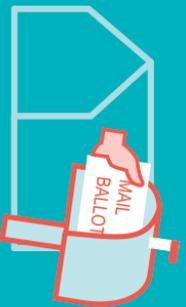
Rhode Island Department of State | Elections Division

148 West River Street, Providence, 02903
401.222.2340 | elections@sos.ri.gov

Rhode Island State Board of Elections

50 Branch Ave., Providence, 02904
401.222.2345

Know your voting options!



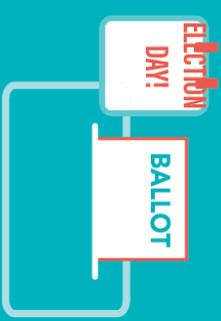
FROM HOME

Go to vote.ri.gov to download a mail ballot application -OR- contact your city or town hall.



EARLY IN PERSON

Contact your city or town hall. Wear a mask.



ON ELECTION DAY

Go to vote.ri.gov to find your polling place. Wear a mask.

vote.ri.gov

Be A Voter



Be A Voter

August

SAT	SUN	MON
	<p>9 Voter Registration Deadline 👉 vote.ri.gov</p>	<p>10</p>
	<p>16</p>	<p>17</p> 

Be A Voter

October

AT	SUN	MON
	4 Voter Registration Deadline  vote.ri.gov	5
	11	12 



THE ISSUES WHO DOES WHAT?

There are three levels of government: local, state, and federal. These different levels have different decision making responsibilities and powers.

If we want to bring about change on an issue that matters to us, we need to know which part of government oversees it.



Issues that affect us:

**CITY/TOWN
LOCAL**

Mayor
Town Administrator
City/town Council
School Committee

**RHODE ISLAND
STATE**

Governor
General Officers
State Representatives
State Senators

**UNITED STATES
FEDERAL**

President
Vice President
US Representatives
US Senators

				
 EDUCATION	School uniforms			
	School days required			
	Time for recess			
 ENVIRONMENT	Expand recycling			
	Ban smoking on beaches			
	Provide clean drinking water			
 PUBLIC SAFETY	More crosswalks			
	Drunk driving laws			
	Laws about guns			
 ECONOMY	Affordable housing			
	Taxes			
	Creating jobs			
 TRANSPORTATION	More bike paths			
	Public busses and trains			
	Better sidewalks			



Rhode Island Voter Registration Form

Official use for barcode

This form is for: New voter Update my information Party change

! Eligibility

If you check "No" in response to any of these questions, do not complete this form.

Are you a citizen of the United States? Yes No

Are you a resident of Rhode Island? Yes No

Are you at least 16 years of age? Yes No *You must be 18 years old to vote.*

Personal Information

All fields on this form are required except when indicated as optional.

Phone/email is optional and is public record.

Last Name Suffix

First Name Middle Initial

Date of Birth (mm/dd/yyyy) Phone/Email (optional)

Identification Numbers

If you have never voted in Rhode Island, please enter the appropriate identification number.

Driver's License and State ID card must be issued by the RI Division of Motor Vehicles.

You may also submit a copy of your identification with this application.

Rhode Island Driver's License or State ID card number: _____

I have not been issued a RI Driver's License or State ID card.
Enter the last 4 digits of your Social Security Number (SSN): _____

I have not been issued a RI Driver's License, State ID card, or a Social Security Number.

Rhode Island Home Address

Home Address (Not a PO Box) Unit Number

RI

City/Town State Zip Code

Mailing Address

If different from Rhode Island Home Address.

Mailing Address Unit Number

City/Town State Zip Code

Party Affiliation

Democrat Republican Unaffiliated Other: _____

Affirmation and Signature

Warning: If you sign this form and know it to be false, you can be convicted and fined up to \$5,000 or jailed up to 10 years.

I swear or affirm that:

I am a U.S. Citizen; I live at the address set forth above; I will be at least eighteen (18) years old when I vote; I am not incarcerated in a correctional facility upon a felony conviction; I have not been lawfully judged "mentally incompetent" to vote by a court of law. The information I have provided is true to the best of my knowledge under pains and penalty of perjury. If I have provided false information, I may be fined, imprisoned, or (if not a U.S. citizen) deported from or refused entry into the United States.

SIGN HERE:

X

Date Signed
(mm/dd/yyyy)

Update my Information

If you have changed your name or were already registered to vote in RI or in another state.

Previous Name

Previous Address (County, City/Town, State, Zip Code)

Get Involved!

I am interested in being a poll worker