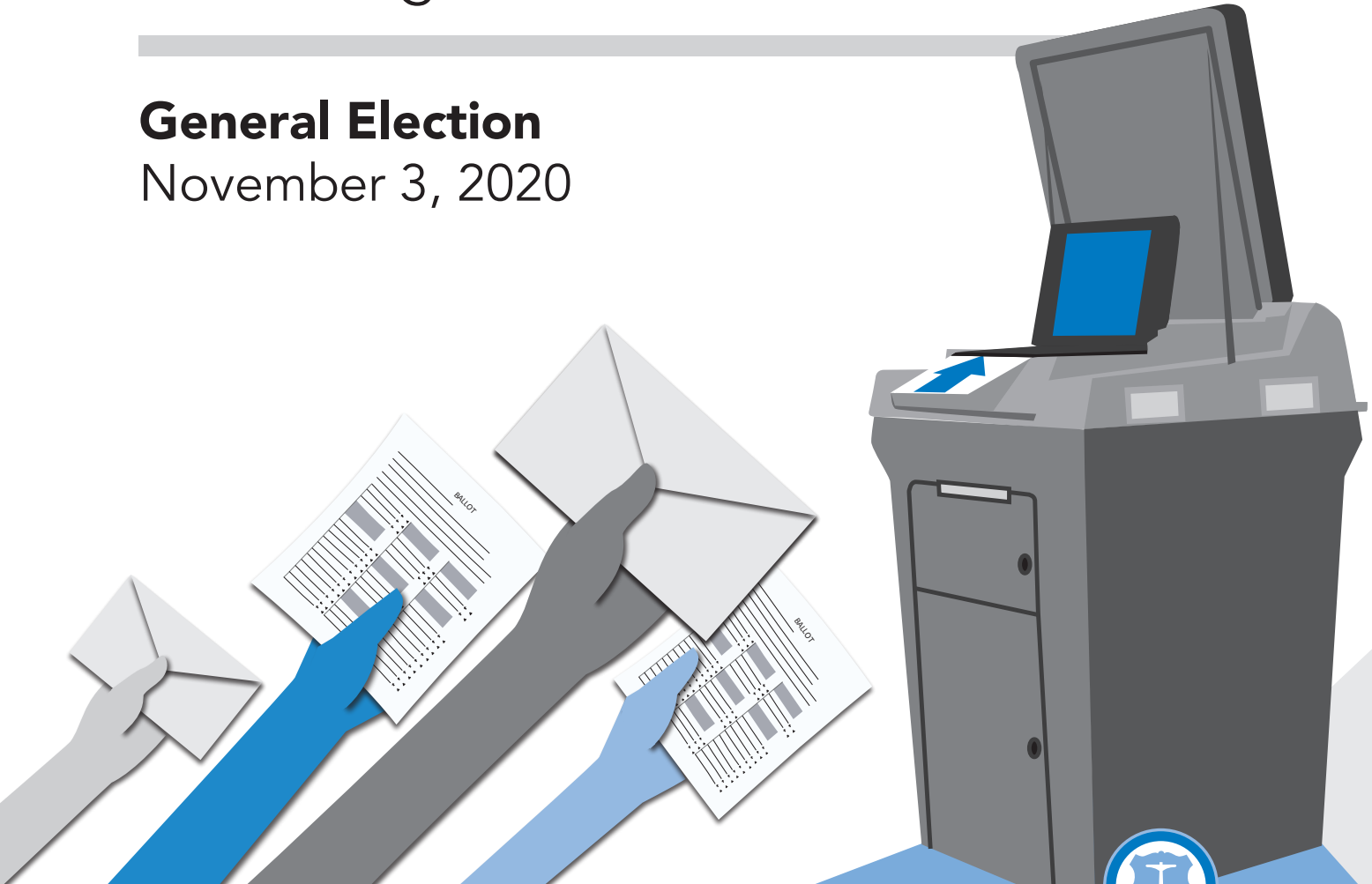


# Voter Information Handbook

A Guide to State Referenda  
and Voting Procedures in Rhode Island

## General Election

November 3, 2020



**Nellie M. Gorbea**  
Secretary of State

# Message from the Secretary

Dear Rhode Island Voter:

As your Secretary of State, it is my responsibility to make sure you are able to exercise your right to vote safely and securely. The social distancing practices that help us prevent the spread of COVID-19 have forced us to change many aspects of our lives but we can still be united in casting our votes. I am sending you this guide to make it easy for you to be informed, be engaged, and be a voter in 2020.

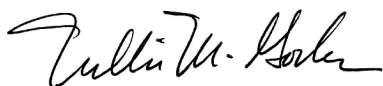
As a Rhode Island voter, you have the power to help move our great state forward. You have three options for safely and securely casting a ballot this year and this guide offers more information on each of these voting methods. I urge you to make your voice heard. If you have applied for a mail ballot, be sure to fill out your ballot and return it as quickly as possible (see page 5).

Your guide also contains information about a very important state question you will see on your ballot. Voters will be asked to approve or reject language that changes the official name of the state. You can see the complete question on page 8.

Locally, there are 21 communities in which you may also be asked to approve or reject municipal ballot questions. Be sure to familiarize yourself with these questions before filling out your ballot. You can view your sample ballot on your cell phone or your computer by going to our online Voter Information Center ([vote.ri.gov](http://vote.ri.gov)). You can also call your local board of canvassers for more information about local ballot questions.

Your vote matters and is absolutely critical to Rhode Island's success. Please help me get this information to as many people as possible by sharing it with your friends and family. This guide is also available on our website ([vote.ri.gov](http://vote.ri.gov)). If you need additional information, please call the voter information hotline by dialing 2-1-1. You may also contact our Elections Division at [elections@sos.ri.gov](mailto:elections@sos.ri.gov).

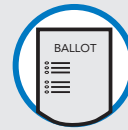
**Make a difference. Be A Voter!**



**Nellie M. Gorbea**  
Secretary of State

P.S. Be sure to follow us on Twitter (@RISecState), on Facebook (RISecState), and on Instagram @RISecState!

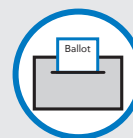
## Be Voter Ready!



### Preview a sample ballot

Your choice of candidates depends on where you live.

Locally, there are 21 communities in which you will be asked to approve or reject municipal ballot questions. You can see a sample of your local ballot by visiting the online Voter Information Center at [vote.ri.gov](http://vote.ri.gov).



### Voting early in-person

Contact your local board of canvassers to determine their early voting hours. See page 10 for contact information.

### Voting on Election Day

Go to [vote.ri.gov](http://vote.ri.gov) to find your polling place.





### Wear a mask when voting in person!


Keep your elections officials safe.


## CONTACT US

 2-1-1

 [elections@sos.ri.gov](mailto:elections@sos.ri.gov)

 [vote.ri.gov](http://vote.ri.gov)

 @RISecState

 Like us on Facebook  
RISecState

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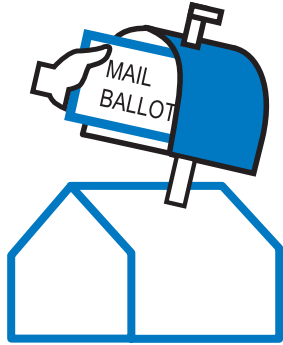
## WARNING

Voter fraud is a felony and may be punishable by a fine and/or a jail sentence.  
You must be a United States citizen and registered to vote from your actual place of residence.



Esta guía esta disponible en español en  
nuestra página de internet:  
**vote.ri.gov**

## Ways to Vote



### VOTE FROM HOME

Voting from home is a safe and easy option for those voters who do not want to vote in-person.

Voters who completed their mail ballot application and returned it by the deadline (*Tuesday, October 13, 2020 at 4:00 p.m.*), will have a mail ballot sent to them.

Refer to page 5 for important information about returning your mail ballot.



### VOTE EARLY IN-PERSON

**October 14 - November 2**



Call your local board of canvassers for voting hours and accessible voting entrance.



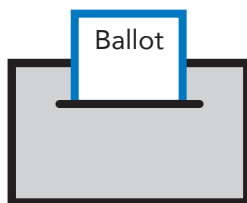
Preview your ballot at **vote.ri.gov**



Bring a valid photo ID



Wear a mask!



### VOTE ON ELECTION DAY



Find your polling place and polling place hours at **vote.ri.gov**



Preview your ballot at **vote.ri.gov**



Bring a valid photo ID

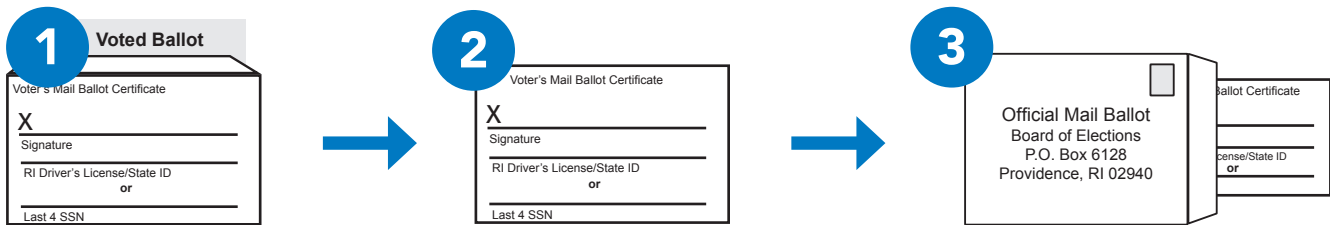


Wear a mask!

# Voting from Home

Voting from home with a mail ballot is a safe and secure option for voters who do not want to vote in-person. All mail ballot applications must have been received by 4 p.m. on October 13. Please contact your local board of canvassers if you missed the application deadline and do not want to vote in-person.

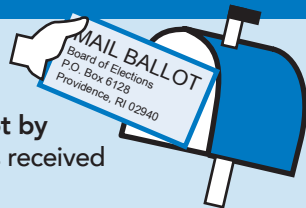
Below are the procedures for securely returning your voted mail ballot:



- Insert the voted ballot into the Voter's Mail Ballot Certificate (smaller) envelope.
- Seal it.
- Print your telephone number (In case there are questions regarding your ballot.)
- Include your RI Driver's License/ State ID or last four digits of your Social Security Number.
- **Sign the envelope.** (This will be compared to the signature in your voter record.)
- Place completed Voter's Mail Ballot Certificate envelope into the larger envelope addressed to the Board of Elections.
- Seal it.

## RETURN BY MAIL

- No postage necessary
- Be sure to mail your ballot by **October 27** to ensure it is received by Election Day.
- Your ballot must be received by **8 p.m. on Election Day (November 3).**



## RETURN BY DROP BOX

- No postage necessary
- Drop your ballot off at any **24-hour drop box** in RI.
- Must be in a drop box by **8 p.m. on Election Day (November 3).**



[Go to vote.ri.gov](http://vote.ri.gov) to learn more about drop box locations.

## ! If you make a mistake when marking the ballot

- If you make a mistake when marking your ballot, **DO NOT** cross out on the ballot.
- Immediately contact the Department of State's Elections Division at 401-222-2340, TDD 711 or via email at [elections@sos.ri.gov](mailto:elections@sos.ri.gov) to make arrangements to receive a replacement ballot.



Track your Ballot  
[vote.ri.gov](http://vote.ri.gov)

## Questions about your ballot?

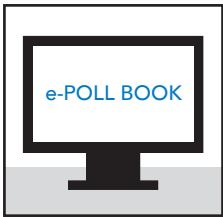
Contact the Board of Elections: 401-222-2345 or at [boe.elections@elections.ri.gov](mailto:boe.elections@elections.ri.gov).

For general election questions, call the Elections Hotline at 2-1-1.

# Voting In-Person

You have two options for voting in-person. In the 20 days leading up to Election Day, you can vote in-person at your city or town hall during their regular business hours. Or you may vote in-person at your polling place on Election Day.

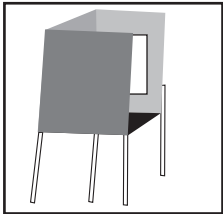
Below are the procedures for voting in-person.



## Get your ballot

Check in with elections officials by scanning your photo ID into the electronic poll book. Elections officials will ask you to sign the electronic poll book screen.

They will provide you with the appropriate ballot and a secrecy folder to ensure the privacy of your election choice(s).

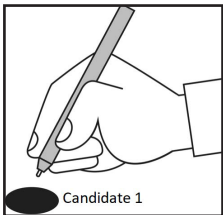


## Go to the voting booth

### Read the directions at the top of your ballot!

Be sure to check both sides of the ballot.

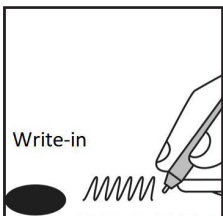
Some elected offices or questions will appear on the back of the ballot.



## Mark your choice(s)

Fill in the oval to the left of your choice(s).

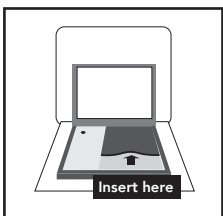
Some races allow voting for more than one candidate. Do not vote for more candidates than indicated.



## To vote for a write-in candidate

To vote for a candidate whose name is not on the ballot:

Fill in the oval to the left of "Write-in" and print the name clearly in the box.



## Counting your vote

Remove your ballot from the secrecy folder and insert your ballot into the voting machine.

**DO NOT INSERT THE SECRECY FOLDER INTO THE VOTING MACHINE.**

Place the empty secrecy folder on top of the voting machine and proudly wear your "I Voted" sticker.

## Different address?

If you moved within the same city/town without updating your voter registration address you will need to complete an affirmation form before voting.

## ! If you make a mistake when marking the ballot

If you make a mistake, do not cross out on the ballot or try to insert it into the voting machine. Instead, bring your ballot to an elections official and ask for a new one to start over.

## ? Provisional Voting on Election Day

If your name does not appear on the voter list, you do not have an acceptable form of photo ID, or there is another potential issue with your eligibility to vote, you will be allowed to cast a provisional ballot. This means that your vote may be counted by your local board of canvassers after Election Day.

# Accessibility and Voting Assistance at the Polls

## Accessible polling place for elderly, disabled and visually impaired voters

Each polling place will have at least one handicapped-accessible voting booth designated for priority use by voters who are over 65 years of age or have some disability.

Voters who have a medical disability which would cause the voter to experience severe discomfort by standing in line will be allowed to move to the front of the line.

Each polling place will also be equipped with a sheet magnifier to assist voters who are visually impaired.

**!** If the polling place you are assigned to is inaccessible, you should notify your local board of canvassers and they will arrange an alternate means for you to cast your vote.

Any voter who requires assistance to vote by reason of blindness, disability, or inability to read or write may be given assistance by a pair of poll workers or a person of the voter's choice. The voter's employer or agent of that employer, or an officer or agent of the voter's union ARE PROHIBITED from providing assistance.

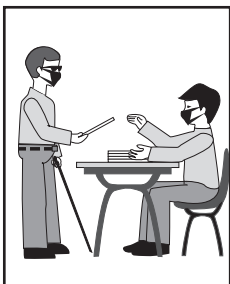
## Using the accessible AutoMark equipment

In accordance with the federal Help America Vote Act (HAVA) and state law, an accessible voting unit (AutoMark) will be available at each polling place for every primary and election.

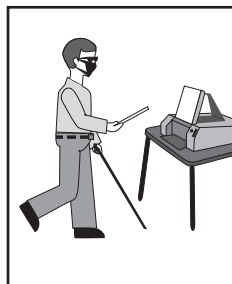
The AutoMark can read and mark the ballot for the voter. This allows voters with reading, vision and other disabilities to mark their ballot privately and independently.

All registered voters are automatically entitled to use the accessible voting equipment located at each polling place. No special applications are required.

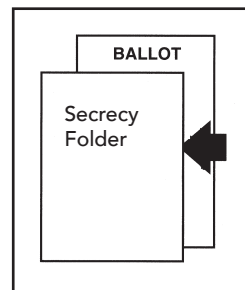
When you arrive at your polling place, you will proceed to the check-in table and tell poll workers that you wish to use the AutoMark to assist in marking your ballot.



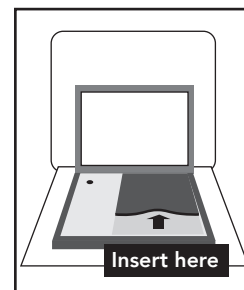
Receive ballot and secrecy folder from the poll worker.



Use the AutoMark unit to mark your ballot in private. Place your ballot into the AutoMark unit. Follow the instructions and make selections by using the keypad or touchscreen.



Insert your ballot into the secrecy folder and go to the voting machine.



Remove ballot from the secrecy folder and insert your ballot into the voting machine.

# State Referendum – Question 1

The Rhode Island Constitution requires voters to approve certain decisions made by the General Assembly. A referendum is when voters are asked to approve or reject constitutional amendments. Below is the single question that will appear on your ballot.

## What it will look like on the ballot:

### Approve

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Your vote to “Approve” would remove “and Providence Plantations” from the official name for the state.

### Reject

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Your vote to “Reject” would keep “and Providence Plantations” in the official name for the state.

#### **1. AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION OF THE STATE (CHANGING THE OFFICIAL NAME OF THE STATE) (Section 1 of Article XIV of the Constitution)**

Approval of the amendment to the Title, Preamble, Section 3 of Article III, and Section 8 of Article IX of the Rhode Island Constitution set forth below will have the effect of changing the official name of the State from “State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations” to “State of Rhode Island”:

#### **Full text of amendment for Question 1**

#### CONSTITUTION OF THE STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

#### PREAMBLE

We, the people of this State which state shall henceforth be known as the state of Rhode Island, grateful to Almighty God for the civil and religious liberty which He hath so long permitted us to enjoy, and looking to Him for a blessing upon our endeavors to secure and to transmit the same, unimpaired, to succeeding generations, do ordain and establish this Constitution of government.

#### ARTICLE III OF QUALIFICATION FOR OFFICE:

Section 3. Oath of general officers. - - All general officers shall take the following engagement before they act in their respective offices, to wit: You being by the free vote of the electors of this state of Rhode Island, elected unto the place of do solemnly swear (or, affirm) to be true and faithful unto this state, and to support the Constitution of this state and of the United States; that you will faithfully and impartially discharge all the duties of your aforesaid office to the best of your abilities, according to law: So help you God. [Or: This affirmation you make and give upon the peril of the penalty of perjury.]

#### ARTICLE IX OF THE EXECUTIVE POWER

Section 8. Commissions. - - All commissions shall be in the name and by authority of the State of Rhode Island; shall be sealed with the state seal, signed by the governor, and attested by the secretary.

Approve

Reject



# Definitions of Terms

## **AUTOMARK**

An accessible voting unit that can read and mark the ballot for the voter. This allows voters with reading, vision and other disabilities to mark their ballot privately and independently.

## **E-POLL BOOK**

The iPads at each polling place that contain the list of registered voters. Poll workers use the e-poll books to check voters in before voting.

## **ELECTOR**

A qualified voter in an election.

## **POLLING PLACE**

A voting location where voters cast their ballot on Election Day. Every voter is assigned a polling location based on where they live.

## **PROVISIONAL VOTING**

Provisional voting is a process to ensure that all registered voters are allowed to participate in the election process. These qualified voters will be allowed to cast the same ballot as all others however, the disposition (full ballot, federal offices only, or disqualified) of that ballot will be determined by the voter's local board of canvassers. The voter may then learn the disposition of the ballot by visiting [elections.ri.gov](http://elections.ri.gov) or by calling the Board of Elections at 222-2345.

## **REFERENDUM**

The Rhode Island Constitution requires voters directly make certain decisions instead of the General Assembly. A referendum is the way our legislative body (the General Assembly or town or city council) asks voters to make those decisions on proposals such as constitutional amendments, long-term borrowings like bonds, special laws affecting some cities and towns (like municipal charters) or the expansion of gambling.

The referendum is always asked as a question for voters to approve or reject. Referenda is the plural form of the word referendum.

## **VOTING ASSISTANCE**

A poll worker will explain how to mark your ballot if you ask. The cover of the secrecy folder and the inside wall of the voting booth will also contain instructions on how to mark your ballot.

Per state law, anyone can assist the voter unless they are the voter's employer or agent of that employer, or an officer or agent of the voter's union.

You can request the assistance of a bipartisan pair of poll workers. Federal and state laws allow voters who are blind, disabled or unable to read or write to bring a person of their choice into the voting booth. The poll worker will have an affidavit that must be completed.

## **VOTE EARLY IN-PERSON**

The option for voters to vote in-person at their city/town hall on the 20 days leading up to Election Day.

## **VOTE FROM HOME**

The option for voters to apply for and receive their ballot at home, also referred to as mail ballot or absentee ballot.

## Local Boards of Canvassers

**Barrington Town Hall**  
283 County Rd. 02806  
247-1900 x1

**Bristol Town Hall**  
10 Court St. 02809  
253-7000 x2

**Burrillville Town Hall**  
105 Harrisville Main St.  
Harrisville 02830  
568-4300 x7

**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  
780-3121

**Cumberland Town Hall**  
45 Broad St. 02864  
475-9040

**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  
392-9200 x1

**Glocester Town Hall**  
1145 Putnam Pike  
P.O. Box B, Chepachet 02814  
568-6206 x0

**Hopkinton Town Hall**  
1 Town House Rd. 02833  
377-7777

**Jamestown Town Hall**  
93 Narragansett Ave. 02835  
423-9801

**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  
268-1553

**North Providence Town Hall**  
2000 Smith St. 02911  
232-0900 x234

**North Smithfield Town Hall**  
83 Green St. 02806  
767-2200 x504

**Pawtucket City Hall**  
137 Roosevelt Ave. 02860  
722-1637

**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, N. Scituate 02857  
647-2822 x1

**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 x108

**West Warwick Town Hall**  
1170 Main St. 02893  
827-9038

**Westerly Town Hall**  
45 Broad St. 02891  
348-2503

**Woonsocket City Hall**  
169 Main St.  
P.O. Box B 02895  
767-9221

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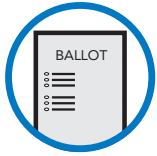
## State Board of Elections

2000 Plainfield Pike, Cranston, RI 02921  
401.222.2345

## Disability Rights Rhode Island

33 Broad Street, Suite 601, Providence, RI 02903  
401.831.3150

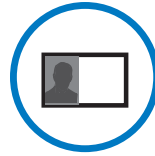
# Voting In-Person Checklist



REVIEW YOUR  
BALLOT



FIND YOUR  
VOTING PLACE



BRING A VALID  
PHOTO ID



WEAR A  
MASK

You can use this checklist to keep track of where and how you will vote.

**Remember, your vote is private and you do not need to share it with anyone.**

**I am voting:**

Early at City/Town Hall

On Election Day at my polling place

## Federal

President/Vice-President \_\_\_\_\_

US Senate \_\_\_\_\_

US House \_\_\_\_\_

## State

State Senator \_\_\_\_\_

State Representative \_\_\_\_\_

## Local

Local Office \_\_\_\_\_

Local Office \_\_\_\_\_

Local Office \_\_\_\_\_

Local Office \_\_\_\_\_

Local Office \_\_\_\_\_

## State Referendum Question

Question 1

Approve

Reject