

Elkhart County

Voter Registration
Drive Guide



To whom it may concern:

This guide is designed to assist you with voter registration drives within Elkhart County, and provides rules and regulations regarding changes in voter registration forms, distribution procedures and turning in applications on behalf of others.

If you have further questions, don't hesitate to contact the Election Board at (574) 535-6469, or Voter Registration at (574) 535-6775.

You can find more information at the Secretary of State's website:

www.in.gov/sos/elections

OR the Elkhart County Election Board's website:

<http://www.elkhartcountyclerk.com>

You can obtain blank voter registration forms from any County Clerks Office, you can print them from either website, above, or you can obtain them from the voter registration office (see contact information on the last page).

Before conducting a voter registration drive, you may find it useful to purchase lists of already registered voters in an area you are thinking of visiting, in order to reach the largest number of unregistered people in the area. Lists can be purchased from the Voter Registration Office, located in the County Administration Building, at 117 N. 2nd St., in Goshen, in the basement level. Contact them to be informed of list format options and pricing (535-6775).

Good luck to you!

Train your team

Training staff who will be conducting voter registration drives is important, and will ensure a better experience for your group as well as for the applicants you reach out to.

Be sure each person on your team understands how important it is for the voter registration forms to be completed correctly by the person conducting the drive AND by the applicant.

It is also critical that anyone conducting a registration drive has the up-to-date version of the voter registration form. Outdated forms are not acceptable!!! The most current version of the State form can be found on our website: www.elkhartcountyclerk.com, or the Federal voter registration form is also acceptable.

Since 2014, Indiana law requires that any person conducting a voter registration drive, who collects completed voter registration applications on behalf of another, also complete **1)** a receipt to provide to the voter, outlining personal information about themselves, as the person conducting the registration drive, and **2)** a certified statement on the voter registration form itself, outlining the same personal information for the voter registration office. This information is now required to protect the voter, so they are certain that their registration form will be turned in for them, in a timely fashion, as well as to provide the voter registration office contact information in case there is a problem with the applications.

The sooner you educate staff on the proper administration of a registration drive, the better prepared your team will be to meet requirements.

Also on January 1, 2014, Indiana law began requiring that a person who collects voter registration applications on behalf of another person **MUST** turn in the form to the voter registration office, OR the Indiana Election Division **within 10 days** of the date they received the application from the applicant, or prior to the voter registration deadline, whichever comes first. This deadline applies to both the Indiana voter registration forms and the Federal voter registration form.

Failure to turn in forms within this timeline could potentially result in prosecution. Again, educating your staff is key to the success of your voter registration drive!!

Basic Information/FAQs:

Each volunteer must understand that if they are asked a question that they don't know the answer to, they should refer the person to the election board (535-6469), or the voter registration office (535-6775).

Each volunteer must be aware that certain personal information provided on voter registration applications, and maintained by the voter registration office is confidential, and they should protect the information of the applicants as if it is their own personal information.

Q: Can a voter registration form be collected from an individual who is a resident of Indiana, but not of Elkhart County?

A: Yes. The form throughout the State is the same, but where it is turned in is different. If you receive an application from a resident outside of Elkhart County, the Elkhart County Voter Registration Office can submit the form to the proper County for you.

Q: When is the Indiana voter registration deadline?

A: The deadline to register to vote in Indiana, if a voter wishes to participate in an upcoming election, is 29 days before the election.

Q: What if I don't want to be responsible for the 10-day turnaround requirement for turning in voter registration applications that I collect?

A: You can direct the applicant to mail the form to the address provided on the form, but please provide them the deadline. The voter registration form MUST be postmarked on or before the close of registration (29 days before the election), OR you can direct the applicant to register online at www.indianavoters.com (they must have a valid Indiana driver's license or Indiana ID card to register online.)

Q: Who can register to vote in Indiana?

A: To register in Indiana, a person must:

- Be a United States Citizen;
- Be at least 18 years of age on the day of the next general or municipal election;
- Have lived in their precinct for at least 30 days before the next election (except for certain military or overseas voters); and
- Not currently be imprisoned after being convicted of a crime.

Q: What are residency requirements in Indiana to register to vote?

A: For the purposes of voter registration, a person's residence is defined based on the person's circumstances and intent. Under Indiana Law, a voter CANNOT have more than one legal residence. A voter can only register to vote from the place where the voter has their true, fixed and permanent home and principle establishment, and to which the person, whenever absent, intends to return. If a person moves to another State or another County, but intends to return to Elkhart County, they may still claim to be a legal resident of Elkhart County. However, they cannot be registered in more than one State or County.

College Students: A student who is going to school away from home can register to vote either at their home address, OR their school address, (depending upon whether the student intends to return to their home at some point) but cannot be registered in both places. If they choose to register at their school address, they are authorizing the cancellation of their registration at their home address.

Transient voters: A person who has no residence address (such as a homeless or transient person) may register to vote by providing a short description of their residence in section 4, and also attaching a map or diagram of where their "nontraditional" residence is located. This person can provide a mailing address anywhere within Elkhart County for delivery of notices from the voter registration office (see section 5.)

Q: How does a person who was convicted of a crime, and who has served their time, register?

A: Once a person is no longer incarcerated, they must re-register to vote, prior to the registration deadline, if they wish to participate in an upcoming election.

Q: What if the applicant is unsure if they are already registered?

A: A person can verify their registration status at www.Indianavoters.com , or by contacting the voter registration office (535-6775).

- Q: How do I register someone who doesn't speak English?
- A: The Indiana Voter Registration Application is available in both English and Spanish. If someone of some other nationality would like to register, they would need someone to assist them with completing the application. The person providing the assistance will need to complete the bottom portion of the application, stating that they assisted the applicant, and provide their name, and address on the application.
- Q: What information can I complete FOR the applicant?
- A: Indiana law does NOT allow anyone to complete any part of the application for another person, unless the person asks them to assist. If the applicant asks for assistance, the person assisting must complete the portion of the application in the **lower left corner of section 14**, providing their name, address and telephone number.
- Q: What if the applicant is unable to sign their own name?
- A: The applicant MUST make an identifying mark on the signature line, and if someone else fills out the form for the applicant, that person must write their name, address and telephone number in the **lower left corner of section 14**, stating that they provided assistance.
- Q: Can I charge a fee to assist an applicant? Can I pay an applicant for completing the application?
- A: In Indiana, it is illegal to accept a fee OR to offer monetary or non-monetary "payment" to register to vote.
- Q: If an applicant states that they have moved, or changed their name, is there a special registration form to update their registration?
- A: If an applicant has moved or changed their name, the applicant completes the same voter registration form, but indicates current address AND prior address, or current name AND prior name, as well as indicating in the appropriate checkbox that they are filing an address change or name change.
- Q: How does a voter change their party preference in Indiana?
- A: In Indiana, a voter does not provide party preference on the voter registration application. Party affiliation is determined by the person's voting history in Primary elections.

- Q: How would someone CANCEL their Elkhart County voter registration?
- A: A person can contact the voter registration office (535-6775) to request a cancellation form, which will be mailed to them. Once the cancellation form is completed and returned, the voter registration office will cancel the voter's registration.
- Q: What if the applicant has a power-of-attorney, and the applicant *wants* that person to complete their form?
- A: The power-of-attorney can complete the form, including the section stating that they provided assistance to the applicant, but the power-of-attorney CANNOT sign the registration form for the applicant.
- Q: If a voter registration form is properly completed, what happens next?
- A: The voter registration office will process the application to determine the applicant's eligibility. If the applicant is eligible, a voter registration acknowledgment card will be mailed to the voter, which will include the voter's precinct number, and legislative representation. If the voter is not eligible, or if the application is not properly completed, the voter registration office will contact the voter to notify the voter of the issue with the application. If the voter has not received an acknowledgment card or other communication from the voter registration office within 30 days, they should contact voter registration (535-6775).
- Q: Is identification required for someone to register to vote?
- A: No, not in Indiana, UNLESS the voter is a first time applicant who is registering by mail. If the voter is registering for the first time by mail, they can include any of the following:
- Photocopy of current valid photo ID
 - Photocopy of a current utility bill
 - Photocopy of a bank statement
 - Photocopy of a government check, paycheck or other government document
- Any document presented MUST include the voter's name, and have an address that matches the address the voter has provided on their registration form.

How to ensure the voter registration applications are complete:

Certain information on the voter registration application **MUST** be provided, or the application will be considered incomplete. It would be helpful to the applicant if you look over the application and make sure the following information is provided:

- Applicant’s last name, and first name in **section 3**.
- Applicant’s **PHYSICAL** address – NOT a post office box in **section 4**.
An applicant can indicate a post office box in the mailing address box, but in order to place an applicant in a precinct, a physical residence address must be provided.
- Date of birth in **box 7**.
- Applicant **MUST** answer whether they are a U.S. citizen in **box 10**.
- Applicant **MUST** answer whether they will be 18 on or before election day in **box 11**, **EVEN** if they have already provided their date of birth.
- Applicant **MUST** provide a voter identification number or indicate “none” in **section 12**.
- A homeless or transient applicant **MUST** provide a description of their nontraditional residence in **section 4**, and attach a map (if the applicant has no residence address with a street number or name provided on the application.)
- **APPLICANT MUST** sign their own name, or make a distinguishing mark in **section 14**, **and provide the date they are signing the application**.
- **YOU – THE PERSON CONDUCTING THE REGISTRATION DRIVE – MUST complete the receipt, and give it to the applicant AND complete the certified statement (box 15) on the registration form itself.**

Other notes about the registration form:

- If an applicant does not provide the *County* where they live, we are able to look it up based on the residence address the applicant provided.
- If an applicant has indicated they are completing the form as an address change, they need to also include their previous address in **section 6**.
- If an applicant has indicated they are completing the form as a name change, they need to also include their previous name in **section 13**.
- If a voter wants communication from voter registration to be sent to an address OTHER THAN their residence address, they can provide a mailing address in **section 5**.
- If an applicant indicates their telephone number in **box 8**, voter registration can contact the applicant with any questions by phone, rather than by mail. However, the applicant's telephone number is NOT required.
- The applicant's e-mail address is NOT required – this would be an additional way for the voter registration office to contact the applicant, if they would need to.
- When a person moves and completes a change of address form at the post office, this does NOT update the voter's registration. When a voter moves, they MUST complete and return a new voter registration form if they wish to be able to participate in upcoming elections, and be provided the correct ballot.

Additional information:

A voter does NOT need to re-register every election year. A voter can check their registration status at any time at www.Indianavoters.com, or by contacting the voter registration office (535-6775) if they are uncertain of their registration status.

A voter's registration is NEVER cancelled just because the voter does not choose to exercise their right to vote. However, if the county determines that a voter may not still live at the address where the person is registered, cancelling this registration requires a complex procedure that includes several communications through the mail to the voter. Voter registration does NOT cancel voters without following the proper legal requirements to do so.

An applicant who is not yet 18 years of age, but who will be on or before the next general election is eligible to register to vote, AND can vote in the primary election, but will not be able to vote on public questions and could receive a ballot that does not include any public questions.

If an applicant also wishes to vote absentee, they need to contact the election board at (574) 535-6469, (574) 535-6627 or (574) 534-5671. In Indiana, a voter who wishes to vote absentee MUST apply for an absentee ballot for EVERY election in which they wish to vote (except for certain military and overseas voters.)

If you, as the person conducting the registration drive, feel that an applicant has provided fraudulent information on a voter registration application, you must deliver the application to the election board with a sworn statement indicating why you believe the application is false or fraudulent. The election board is required to consider appropriate action, including possible prosecution of the applicant.

It is a crime for a person to knowingly register to vote, knowing that they are not eligible to vote, and a person can be fined, jailed, or both.

It is a crime to recklessly destroy or fail to deliver a completed voter registration form of another person, as required by law.

It is a crime to 1) conspire with an individual for the purpose of encouraging the individual to submit a false application for registration; 2) conspire with an individual for the purpose of encouraging the individual to vote illegally; 3) pay or offer to pay an individual to apply for an absentee ballot, cast an absentee ballot, register to vote, or vote; and 4) accept a payment for applying for an absentee ballot, casting an absentee ballot, registering to vote, or voting.

You are providing a great service to the people you reach out to, and undertaking a very important task, that should be taken seriously. We appreciate the work you are doing, and hope that your registration drive is successful!

If you have any further questions, don't hesitate to contact me or my Chief Deputy at (574) 535-6469, or the voter registration office at (574) 535-6775. You can also stop in to see us at the following locations:

Elkhart County Election Board
101 N. Main, Room 204
Goshen, IN 46526

Elkhart County Voter Registration
117 N. 2nd St., Lower Level
Goshen, IN 46526

Both locations are open from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Mondays, and 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Tuesday through Friday, except for legal holidays.

Sincerely,

Wendy Hudson, Elkhart County Clerk

Resources:

Elkhart County Clerk of the Circuit Court
www.elkhartcountyclerk.com

Elkhart County Holiday Schedule
<http://www.elkhartcountyindiana.com/apply/elkhart-county-holiday-schedule/>

Indiana Secretary of State
www.in.gov/sos/elections
www.indianavoters.com

Information for College Students
<http://www.in.gov/sos/elections/2626.htm>

Who Are My Elected Officials?
<http://wayeo.egis.39dn.com>

Information for Military and Overseas Voters can be found at the
Federal Voting Assistance Program
<https://www.fvap.gov>



Information provided by the Elkhart County Clerk's Office –
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