Voters Information Guide for the 2004 US Election

This guide is a starting point for people wanting information on voting in the upcoming national election on Tuesday, November 2, 2004. Voter information varies from state to state, so please use the sites and phone numbers listed to find out about the particular procedures in your state.

Important: *Registration deadlines in some states are as early as October 2, 2004. Register today (it only takes 5–10 minutes).*

Who can vote?

In most states, you must be a US citizen, at least 18 years of age on November 2, 2004, and registered to vote. Some states have restrictions based on felony convictions and other factors (such as residency). Your state's voter registration form contains full eligibility requirements.

If you've been convicted of a felony, check this US Department of Justice page for information on if and how you can vote.

Register to vote

Before registering, check the voter registration deadlines for your state. Deadlines in some states are as soon as October 2nd, 2004.

To register to vote, enter your zip code on the Just Vote site (la guía de votación está disponible en español) and it will guide you through the creation of a PDF document which you can print out, sign, and send to the appropriate address for your state.

You may also download the National Mail Voter Registration Form (not accepted by all states), obtain forms at many locations in your state (like public libraries, the DMV, the US Post Office, etc.), or contact your state election officials for more information on obtaining the proper forms. You may also google something like "voter registration" and the name of your state to find forms and information.

After you've registered, you'll receive a registration notice in the mail sometime before the election. If November is approaching and you haven't received your registration notice, contact your state's voter registration officials to check on your status.

Voting by mail (absentee voting)

If you are unable to vote in person on election day in your state of residence, are living or stationed abroad, or just wish to not worry about going to the polls on election day, you may vote by absentee ballot. To obtain an absentee ballot for your state, enter your zip code on the Just Vote site and it will guide you through the creation of a PDF document which you can print out, sign, and send to the appropriate address for your state.

If you are living abroad or stationed overseas in the military, you may check this page for the proper forms and instructions or contact your Voting Assistance Officer for information on how to vote.

College students can usually register to vote in either their state of residence (i.e. the state listed on your driver's license) by absentee ballot or in the state in which you're attending college.

The deadline for submitting your absentee ballot varies by state, but it's November 2, 2004 for most states. Find out your state's deadline.

Where to vote?

The notice sent to you after registering to vote should contain the location of your polling place. If it does not, find where you should vote using Just Vote's polling place locator. Just type in your zip code. If your polling place cannot be located, phone numbers for your local election officials are provided to help you find out.

When?

The election is on Tuesday, November 2, 2004. Polls are typically open from 8 AM to 7 PM, but the times vary from state to state so check the poll times for your state. As the election nears, local media will be a good source for when the polls are open in your state.

To find out if identification or your signature is required at the polls, if you get time off of work to vote, if schools are closed, or other information, consult this FAQ on the FEC site.

For more information

If you have questions about any of the above issues, contact your state's election directors or your local election offices.

Hyperlinks and further information at http://kottke.org/plus/vote2004