

48A.5 Voter qualifications.

1. An eligible elector wishing to vote in elections in Iowa shall register to vote as required by [this chapter](#).

2. To be qualified to register to vote an eligible elector shall:

a. Be a citizen of the United States.

b. Be an Iowa resident. A person's residence, for voting purposes only, is the place which the person declares is the person's home with the intent to remain there permanently or for a definite, or indefinite or indeterminable length of time. A person who is homeless or has no established residence may declare residence in a precinct by describing on the voter registration form a place to which the person often returns.

c. Be at least eighteen years of age. Completed registration forms shall be accepted from registrants who are at least seventeen and one-half years of age; however, the registration shall not be effective until the registrant reaches the age of eighteen. The commissioner of registration shall ensure that the birth date shown on the registration form is at least seventeen and one-half years earlier than the date the registration is processed. A registrant who is at least seventeen and one-half years of age and who will be eighteen by the date of a pending election is a registered voter for the pending election for purposes of [chapter 53](#).

d. Not claim the right to vote in more than one place. A registrant shall be presumed to revoke any earlier claim of residence for voter registration purposes.

3. If a person who meets the requirements set forth in [subsection 2](#) moves to a new residence, either in Iowa or outside Iowa, and does not meet the voter requirements at the person's new residence, the person may vote at the person's former precinct in Iowa until the person meets the voter requirements of the person's new residence. However, a person who has moved to a new residence and fails to register to vote at the person's new residence after becoming eligible to do so shall not be entitled to vote at the person's former precinct in Iowa.

4. A citizen of the United States who lives outside of the United States has the right to register and vote as if the person were a resident of a precinct in Iowa if the citizen was an eligible elector of Iowa immediately before leaving the United States. A citizen who was not old enough to register to vote before leaving the United States but who met all of the other requirements for voter registration at that time also has the right to register and vote as if the person were a resident of a precinct in Iowa. This right applies even though while living outside the United States the citizen does not have a residence or other address in the precinct, and the citizen has not determined whether to return to Iowa. To qualify to vote in Iowa a United States citizen living outside the United States shall:

a. Comply with all applicable requirements of [sections 53.37 to 53.53](#) relating to absentee ballots for members of the armed forces and other citizens living outside the United States.

b. Not maintain a residence, shall not be registered to vote, and shall not vote in any other state, territory, or possession of the United States.

c. Possess a valid passport or identity card and registration issued under authority of the United States secretary of state, or, if the citizen does not possess a valid passport or card of identity or registration, an alternative form of identification consistent with the provisions of applicable federal and state requirements.

5. If a United States citizen living outside the United States meets the requirements for voting, except for residence, has never lived in the United States, and has a parent who meets the definition of a member of the armed forces of the United States under [section 53.37](#), the citizen is eligible to register to vote and vote at the same voting residence claimed by the citizen's parent.

6. The deadlines for voter registration shall not apply to a person who has been discharged from military service within thirty days preceding the date of an election. The person shall present to the precinct election official a copy of the person's discharge papers. The person shall complete a voter registration form and give it to the official before being permitted to vote.

[94 Acts, ch 1169, §5; 2007 Acts, ch 59, §40, 43; 2010 Acts, ch 1033, §13, 56](#)

Referred to in [§53.37](#)

Iowa Constitution, Art. II, §1

For future amendment to subsection 2, paragraph c, effective January 1, 2019, see 2017 Acts, ch 110, §55, 64