

ELECTIONS



Chapter 10

ELECTION DATES AND FILING DEADLINES

City Elections

City elections are held on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November of each odd-numbered year. Some cities hold primary elections four weeks before the regular election, and some cities hold runoff elections four weeks after the regular city election.

Nomination petitions for cities with primary elections are filed with the county auditor not more than 85 days nor less than 68 days before the date of the election. Nomination petitions for other cities are filed not more than 72 days nor less than 47 days before the date of the election. The county auditor may require that nomination petitions be filed with the city clerk.

School Elections

School elections are held each odd-numbered year on the same day as the regular city elections. Nomination petitions are filed with the school secretary not more than 71 days nor less than 47 days before the date of the election.

Primary Elections

Primary elections are held on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in June of each even-numbered year for the members of political parties to nominate candidates for the general election ballot. A political party is defined in state law as a party which, at the last preceding general election, cast for its candidate for U.S. President or Governor, as applicable, at least 2 percent of the total vote cast for that office at that election.

Candidates for federal, statewide, and legislative offices must file their nomination petitions with the Secretary of State not more than 99 days nor less than 81 days before the date of the election.

Nomination petitions for county offices must be filed with the county auditor in the appropriate county not more than 92 days nor less than 69 days before the date of the election.

General Elections

General elections are held on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November of each even-numbered year.

Candidates for offices to be filled at the general election may also be nominated by petition or by nonparty political organizations. Candidates for county and township offices file with the county auditor in the appropriate county.

After the primary election, political parties may make nominations by convention for offices for which there was no one nominated at the primary or to fill vacancies on the general election ballot caused by the withdrawal or death of primary election nominees. The last day to file is the same as the deadline for nonpartisan nominations.

Nomination forms are free and may be obtained from the office where the papers are to be filed. There are no filing fees for any office.

ABSENTEE VOTING

Any registered voter may vote by absentee ballot. A person does not need to give a specific reason or explanation for voting by absentee ballot on the absentee ballot application.

Voting by absentee ballot includes voting by mail, in person at the county auditor's office, in person at a satellite voting station prior to election day, or by having a ballot personally delivered to a person if the person lives at a health care facility, is a tenant of an assisted living program, or is a patient in a hospital.

To vote in person prior to an election, a person may go to the county auditor's office or a satellite voting station. A person cannot remove the ballot from the auditor's office or satellite voting station. The county auditor's office is open on the Saturday before the general election. On election day, a person may not vote by absentee ballot at the county auditor's office or a satellite voting station. However, for an election for which the county auditor has directed that the polls open at noon, a person may vote absentee at the county auditor's office from 8 a.m. until 11 a.m. on election day.

To vote by mail, a person must request a ballot early enough before election day to allow time for the ballot to be mailed to the person and for the person to return the ballot to the county auditor on time. A person must request an absentee ballot in writing using either the “Official Absentee Ballot Request Form” or a sheet of paper no smaller than three inches by five inches in size that contains the required information. A person may call the county auditor’s office or the Office of Secretary of State to request that the official form be mailed to the person. The request form can also be obtained online at the Secretary of State’s Internet site and at some county auditors’ Internet sites. The request for an absentee ballot may be sent by fax to the county auditor’s office. However, the person must also mail the original request to the county auditor and it must be postmarked before election day. Email absentee ballot applications cannot be accepted.

A request for the county auditor to mail an absentee ballot must be received by the auditor not more than 120 days before the election and no later than 5 p.m. on the Friday before the election. The ballot will be mailed to the person as soon as it is ready, but not more than 29 days before the election. If the person’s absentee ballot request is received after the ballots are printed, the ballot will be mailed within 24 hours. If the person’s ballot is delayed, the person should check with the county auditor’s office to be sure that the request was received.

Voted absentee ballots may be returned by mail or in person, by the voter or the voter’s designee. Absentee ballots need not be witnessed or notarized. If returned by mail, ballots must be postmarked or marked with a specified postal service barcode no later than the day before the election and received by the county auditor no later than noon on the Monday following the primary election, general election, and most other elections. The deadline is earlier for school elections and elections for cities with runoff provisions. If returned in person, ballots must be returned no later than the time the polls close for that election. Absentee ballots should not be returned to polling places unless the person who requested the ballot wants to vote at the polls instead. No absentee ballots delivered to the polling places will be counted.

Special provisions are made for voters who are members of the U.S. armed forces, who are overseas, or who are patients in hospitals or other health care facilities.

For more information contact: Office of the Secretary of State, Lucas State Office Building, Des Moines 50319; sos.iowa.gov; sos@sos.iowa.gov; 515.281.0145 voice, for TTY dial 711 followed by 515.281.0145, or call 1.888.SOS.VOTE; or a local county auditor.

VOTER REGISTRATION

Registration

A person may register to vote by postcard form or in person if all of the following apply:

1. The person is a citizen of the United States.
2. The person is a resident of Iowa.
3. The person will be at least 18 years old on or before election day.

A person may register to vote if the person is 17 years old. A person may vote at the primary election if the person is at least 17 years old and will be at least 18 years old at the general election or the regular city election.

Address Changes Within a County

If a person moves within the county where the person is registered to vote, the person may change the person’s address before the close of registration by doing any of the following:

1. By notifying the county auditor in writing. The notification must include the person’s full name as it appears on the voter registration records, the person’s old and new addresses, and the person’s signature. If more than one person is submitting a change, each person must sign the notice.
2. By completing a voter registration form. Only one person’s change may be submitted on each form.
3. By making the change in person at the county auditor’s office or other registration sites.

Close of Registration and Election Day Registration

For general elections, registration closes at 5 p.m., 10 days before the election. For all other elections, registration closes at 5 p.m., 11 days before the election. However, after the close of registration for an election, a person may register to vote and vote in that election on election day at the polling place or prior to election day at the county auditor's office or a satellite voting station, if the person provides identification and makes a written oath.

For Information Contact

For more information contact: Voter Registration, Lucas State Office Building, Des Moines 50319; sos.iowa.gov; sos@sos.iowa.gov; 515.281.0145 voice, for TTY dial 711 followed by 515.281.0145, or call 1.888.SOS.VOTE; or a local county auditor.

POLLING HOURS AND RESULTS

With few exceptions, the polling places are opened at 7 a.m. For state and general elections and other partisan elections, the polling places close at 9 p.m. For all other elections, the polling places close at 8 p.m.

For election results, access the Secretary of State's Internet site at sos.iowa.gov/elections/results/index.html.

IOWA DEMOCRATIC PARTY

*5661 Fleur Drive, Des Moines 50321; 515.244.7292;
www.iowademocrats.org*

LIBERTARIAN PARTY OF IOWA

*P.O. Box 480, Des Moines 50302; 515.423.0093;
www.lpia.org*

REPUBLICAN PARTY OF IOWA

*621 East Ninth Street, Des Moines 50309; 515.282.8105;
www.iowagop.org*