



2026 ELECTION GUIDE FOR RESIDENTS



Voting is a fundamental right, and living in long-term care does not take it away from you. If you are a U.S. citizen aged 18 or older, you are most likely eligible to vote at your permanent address, whether that is a home in the community or a nursing home where you now live.

At the Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman (LTCO), we believe facility administrators and staff members should help you exercise your right to vote. Yet we understand the reality that no one else is likely to advocate for your rights with the same enthusiasm as you will.

Our advice to every resident: If you want to vote, make sure you have a plan, and then make it happen. If your plan is to vote in person, find out if your facility will offer transportation or if you need a reliable friend or family member to drive you to the polls.

The Fundamentals: Ensuring Your Right to Vote

The New Jersey Division of Elections maintains a Voter Information Portal at **VOTE.NJ.GOV** that provides key dates and links to valuable resources. Through the portal, you can confirm your voter registration status or learn how to register, if necessary.

Once you are registered, there are three ways to vote in New Jersey:

- 1) In person on Election Day—**June 2** (primary election) or **Nov. 3** (general election);
- 2) In person on days established for early voting; or
- 3) By mail.

To vote in the primary, you must be registered by **May 12**. For the general election, the deadline is **Oct. 13**. You may submit registration applications by mail, in person, or online. Visit **VOTE.NJ.GOV** and select *Register to Vote!*

All registered voters may vote by mail. If you previously opted to receive mail-in ballots for all future elections, you should automatically receive one. If you need to request a mail-in ballot, the deadlines to apply by mail are **May 26** (primary) and **Oct. 27** (general election).

Visit **VOTE.NJ.GOV** and select *Vote-By-Mail* in the right column menu to look up your vote-by-mail status or to access instructions on completing a vote-by-mail application and then mailing or delivering it to your county clerk's office.





Voting in the Primary

In the primary, voters affiliated with the Democrat and Republican parties will select their party's candidates for the general election. If you are unaffiliated—not registered as a Republican or a Democrat—you may vote in either party's primary by showing up at your polling location on **June 2** or the early voting sites in the days before Election Day.

To vote by mail in the primary, unaffiliated voters may submit a Party Affiliation Declaration Form and an application for a mail-in ballot by mail before **May 26** or in person at their County Clerk's Office before 3 p.m. on **Monday, June 1**. Visit **VOTE.NJ.GOV** and select *County Election Officials* to find your County Clerk's Office.

Early Voting

All New Jersey counties will establish locations where registered voters can cast ballots in person before Election Day. The early voting periods for this year are:

- Primary, **May 26 – May 31**
- General, **Oct. 24 – Nov. 1**

LEARN MORE: Visit **VOTE.NJ.GOV** and select *Early Voting* in the right column menu.

Voting by Mail

The Voter Information Portal offers detailed instructions on how to complete a vote-by-mail ballot. Watch a video tutorial at: <https://tinyurl.com/54pmruyw>

Once completed, ballots can be returned by:

- **Regular mail** — Ballots must be postmarked by 8 p.m. on Election Day and received at most six days after Election Day to be counted.
- **Placing it in a secure ballot drop box** by 8 p.m. on Election Day.
- **Delivering it to your county's Board of Elections** by 8 p.m. on Election Day.

Visit **VOTE.NJ.GOV** and select *Vote-By-Mail* in the right column menu for additional details and lists of county election board and secure ballot drop box locations.

Voter Identification

In New Jersey, voters are not routinely required to show ID before voting. However, there are instances where you might be asked to show your ID. If you vote in person, we recommend that you bring valid ID with you.

Forms of acceptable identification include a:

- NJ driver's license (with or without photo)
- U.S. passport
- Military or other government ID
- Student ID
- Employee ID
- Store membership card
- Bank statement, auto registration, government check or document, rent receipt, sample ballot, utility bill, or other official document



Tips for Long-Term Care Facilities

Residents have a right to vote, and your staff should make every effort to empower residents to exercise that right. A few ideas to consider:

- **Designate staff members who will help residents vote.** Activity directors, social workers, van drivers, managers, and administrators can all play a part.
- **Talk to residents about their voting options and how the facility can help.** Inform families about your plans as well.
- **Assess residents' needs and wants.** Try to identify residents who are not registered or who may need ID and help address those issues early. Some residents may need help completing vote-by-mail ballots. Others may need assistance to vote in person.
- **Keep residents informed about deadlines and key dates as they approach.** Put the dates on activity calendars during the months leading up to Election Day.