

Choosing between your hometown or your college town

If you are going to college in a different city than your hometown, here are things you might consider when deciding where to vote:

- Which location is more convenient for you?
- Who is on the ballot in each place?
- Are there local policies or particular issues that are important to you in either place?

Where you register to vote will not affect your federal financial aid, including FAFSA, Pell Grants, Perkins, or Stafford loans. It may affect whether you qualify for in-state tuition.

Voting in your hometown

Even if you're away at school for most of the year, you may have the option to vote in your hometown. Here's what to keep in mind:

- Register to vote using your permanent address in your hometown. Use your college address as your mailing address on your registration.
- Many states allow you to ask for a mail ballot if you're unable to vote in person. Some states mail every voter a ballot automatically. Each state has its own guidelines, so check to see what the rules are in your state or territory. You can have the mail ballot sent to your college address.
- If you will be in your hometown during the election, you may also have the option to vote in person. Use a polling place locator to find out where to vote on or before Election Day.

Voting in a different town in your home state

If you attend college in your home state or territory, but in a different town, you may have the option to vote there. Here's what to keep in mind:

- Massachusetts now allows anyone to vote by mail without an excuse. You have to apply for a mail ballot, which will be sent to you by local election officials. Then you must return the ballot.
- If it's your first time registering to vote, check the residency requirements for voting in your state. You may have to live in your college town for a certain amount of time before you can register there.
- After confirming your eligibility, you can register to vote using the street address of the building where you live, either on or off campus. Don't use a campus mailbox address to register, but you can use a campus mailbox as your mailing address. If you're not sure what address to use, contact your school's civic engagement office or the local election office.
- If you are already registered to vote in your hometown, update your voter registration with your college address. For more guidance on which address to use, contact your local election office.
- If you are able to travel to your hometown during early voting or on Election Day, use a polling place locator to find out where to vote.

Voting in your college town out of state

If you attend college in a state or territory that is different from your home state, you have options to vote there. Here's what to keep in mind:

- In some states, you must live in the state for a certain number of days before you can register to vote there. Check the residency requirements for voting on the [election office website](#) in your college state.
- After you confirm your eligibility, register to vote in your college state. You can register to vote using the street address of the building where you live, either on or off campus. Don't use a campus mailbox address to register, but you can use a campus mailbox as your mailing address. If you're not sure what address to use, contact your school's civic engagement office or the local election office.
- Are you already registered to vote in your home state, but you want to change your registration to your college state? Most counties and states do not require you to cancel your voter registration after you move, but doing so helps your local election officials. Many state and local election offices have forms you can submit to cancel your registration. [Find your state or local election office](#) to get voter cancellation forms.

Voting during study abroad

You can vote from anywhere in the world if you are a U.S. citizen. [Learn more about voting while outside of the U.S.](#)

Registering to vote

Once you're registered, you can take part in local, state, and federal elections throughout the year.

You have options for registering

Each state and territory sets its own rules for registering to vote. Find voter registration deadlines and details (online, paper, in-person options).

There is no national voter registration deadline

In some states, the last day to register is 30 days before Election Day. In other states, you can register on Election Day. Election Day refers to any election (local, state, or a national election).

Do I need identification to vote in Massachusetts?

Federal law requires that any person registering to vote by mail for the first time, or for the first time in a new state, must provide identification. Mail-in registration forms ask for either a Massachusetts driver's license number or the last four digits of your social security number, and registrants are encouraged to enclose a copy of their identification with the form. First-time voters in Massachusetts should also bring some type of identification to their polling place when they go to vote. This does not need to be a photo identification card. Acceptable forms of identification include: a Massachusetts driver's license or state ID card; a utility bill; a government-issued check; a paycheck or paystub; or any other official document bearing the voter's name and address. **Please note that passports, birth certificates, naturalization papers, and student IDs without addresses are not acceptable forms of identification.** Many students get letters from their schools listing their student address for such purposes.