



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF NEW JERSEY EDUCATION FUND

New Jersey Primary Elections at a Glance

Primary elections provide an opportunity for voters to influence the electoral process by nominating a candidate to represent their political party. Whether at the local, state or national level, voting is the most powerful way to have your voice heard. That's why it's crucial that you make sure you're registered and ready to vote before any deadlines pass! Here's a quick look to help answer your questions about this pivotal part of our voting system, specific to New Jersey.

NEW JERSEY DEADLINES: PRIMARY ELECTIONS

- **Change of Party Affiliation Deadline (if already affiliated):** April 11, 2018 (Deadline has passed.)
- **Voter Registration Deadline for Primary:** May 15, 2018 (Voter registration form must be postmarked by this date)
- **Vote By Mail Application (by mail):** May 29, 2018 (County Clerk must receive application by this date)
- **Vote by Mail Application (in person):** 3:00 pm, June 4, 2018
- **2018 NJ Primary Election Date:** June 5, 2018

What is a Primary? Am I Eligible to Vote in the New Jersey Primary?

A primary is an election that allows members of a political party to choose a candidate to represent them in an upcoming election. New Jersey is a closed primary state, which means that only voters who are registered members of a political party may participate in nominating that party's candidates. Currently, only the Republican and Democratic parties use a primary election system to select nominees, so if you are a registered member of *another* political party, you are not eligible to vote in the New Jersey Primary.

I am currently affiliated with a political party, but want to change my affiliation before the primaries. What do I do?

The deadline to change party affiliation has passed. You would have had to file a [Party Affiliation Declaration Form](#) with the Commissioner of Registration/ Superintendent of Elections for your county at least **55 days** before the primary election.

I am not currently affiliated with a political party, but want to vote in the upcoming Primary Election. What do I do?

Unaffiliated voters can register with a political party up to and including Primary Election Day. You must file a **Party Affiliation Declaration Form** with the Commissioner of Registration/Superintendent of Elections for your county by mail or in person. You can also declare your affiliation in person at the polls on Primary Election Day.

Am I eligible to vote and how can I register to vote?

To register to vote in NJ, you must be: a United States citizen; at least 17 years old (and understand you cannot vote until you reach the age of 18); a resident of the county for 30 days before the election; and not currently serving a sentence, probation or parole because of a felony conviction. The voter registration deadline for the June Primary election is May 15, 2018 (forms must be postmarked by that date). [Voter registration forms are available here.](#)

How can I Vote by Mail (formerly absentee)?

In New Jersey, any eligible registered voter can Vote by Mail if you do not need a reason to request a Vote by Mail ballot, but you do need to apply. To receive your Vote by Mail ballot by mail, the application must be received by your County Clerk by May 29, 2018. Voters can also apply in person to the County Clerk up until 3:00 pm on June 4, 2018. [Vote by Mail ballot applications are available here](#), and a list of [County Clerk offices is here](#).

Who am I voting for when I vote in a Primary?

Primary elections happen at all levels of government, including United States President, New Jersey's Senators and Representatives to the U.S. Congress, New Jersey state legislators, as well as county and municipal seats. As a declared member of a party in your voting district you vote to choose which candidate will be that party's nominee to appear on the ballot in an upcoming general election.

How Do I Learn About The Candidates?

Candidate debates and forums are core features of U.S. politics that help voters learn more about a candidate and his or her stance on key issues. Candidates running for federal or statewide office are often easier to find information about. More local primary candidates typically vocalize their opinions through the local newspaper and news channel, participate in community candidate forums, and send out campaign material. Many candidates also create Facebook and Twitter accounts where you can learn more about their platforms. The League of Women Voters of New Jersey covers races at all level at www.vote411.org.

Other Questions?

For any additional information about candidates or the primary election process, please call: 1-800-792-VOTE (8683), email us at contact@lwvnj.org, tweet us @LWVNJ, or reach out on Facebook: [facebook.com/LWVNJ](https://www.facebook.com/LWVNJ).