



TENNESSEE

VOTER REGISTRATION

These resources are current as of 6/2017. We do our best to periodically update these resources and welcome any comments or questions regarding new developments in the law. Please email us at advocacy@afj.org.

What's New in This Guide

The following changes/additions have been made since the previous version of this guide:

- This guide is the first iteration for Tennessee.

This guide summarizes key aspects of laws governing voter registration on the state level. It is not intended to provide legal advice or to serve as a substitute for legal advice.

In some jurisdictions, city and/or county regulations may also apply to certain political activities. Check with the appropriate local jurisdiction before undertaking any activity.

Table of Contents

- I. [Deadlines for Registration](#)
- II. [Voter ID Requirements](#)
- III. [Voter Registration Drives](#)
- IV. [Pending Legislation](#)
- V. [Contact Information for State and Local Agencies](#)

DEADLINES FOR REGISTRATION

- Deadline for registering?
 - The deadline to register to vote for qualified voters is thirty (30) days before each election. TCA § 2-2-109. The registration books are closed on the 29th day before each election. TCA § 2-2-109.
 - Qualified voters in Tennessee are citizens of the United States, eighteen (18) years of age or older who is a resident of Tennessee. TCA § 2-2-102.

- Does state offer Election Day registration?
 - No. Specifically, the voter cannot register to vote on Election Day for that Election. A voter could register to vote on Election Day for the next Election.
 - However, according to the Tennessee Secretary of State (<http://sos.tn.gov/products/elections/how-do-i-update-my-voter-registration-information>), a voter can update their information on Election Day. If the voter's permanent voter registration record differs from the voter's current address, the voter must complete an affidavit before being allowed to vote. The voter will be required to vote either at their new polling location or at a central location designated by the county election commission office.

- Does state allow by-mail registration?
 - Yes. A qualified voter may file a mail registration form by postmarking the registration form or submitting the registration form thirty (30) days before an election. A mail registration form lacking a postmark, but signed and dated at least thirty (30) days before an election, shall be timely filed if it is received by the county election commission no later than the twenty-seventh day prior to the election. TCA § 2-2-109.
 - Additionally, voter registration will be available online beginning in July 2017. TCA 2-2-112.

- May a voter register before turning 18?
 - Yes. As long as the voter is 18 years old on the day of the next election. TCA § 2-2-104(3).

VOTER ID REQUIREMENTS

- Required for registration?
 - No identification is required to register to vote. TCA § 2-2-116.

- Required for voting?

- All voters must present a federal or Tennessee state ID containing the voter's name and photograph when voting at the polls, whether voting early or on Election Day. TCA § 2-7-112(c).
 - What IDs are acceptable?
 - Tennessee driver's license with photo;
 - United States passport;
 - Photo ID issued by the Tennessee Dept. of Safety and Homeland Security;
 - Photo ID issued by the federal or Tennessee state govt.;
 - United States Military photo id; and
 - Tennessee handgun carry permit with your photo.
 - What IDs are not acceptable?
 - College student IDs and photo IDs not issued by the federal or Tennessee state govt. are not acceptable. This includes county or city issued photo IDs, such as library cards, and photo IDs issued by other states.
 - The following are exempt from the photo identification requirement:
 - Voters who vote absentee by mail;
 - Voters who are residents of a licensed nursing home or assisted living center and who vote at the facility;
 - Voters who are hospitalized;
 - Voters with a religious objection to being photographed; and
 - Voters who are indigent and unable to obtain a photo ID without paying a fee.
- Requirement to provide proof of citizenship to register and/or vote?
 - There is no proof of citizenship requirement to register and/or vote. However, citizenship is required to register and the registrant swears that he/she is a registered citizen. TCA §§ 2-2-202 and 2-2-116.

VOTER REGISTRATION DRIVES

- Does state accept national form?
 - No. Tennessee only accepts form SS-3010 to register to vote.
- May groups "cage" completed registration forms (i.e. ask voters to mail them back to the group, which will then send them to the appropriate elections registrar(s))? If so, may they copy the forms or any of data included on them? If so, any deadlines for sending the completed forms to the state or to local officials?

- Tennessee law does not directly address this issue. Thus, there are unlikely to be any restrictions against groups copying the forms or any data included on them.
- The same deadlines for voter registration apply – the forms must be received by the county election commissions thirty (30) days prior to an election.
- May a group “pre-fill” some or all of the form (e.g. name, address) before sending/giving it to a would-be registrant?
 - Tennessee law does not directly address this issue. However, at least one county voter registration drive guide indicates that drives should not make corrections or mark on voter registration applications. See Montgomery County Voter Registration Drive Guide at 7.
- May voter registration drive workers assist a voter in completing their registration form?
 - Yes. Additionally, there are special rules if a registrant’s disability prevents them from writing a signature or making a mark. The person who assists the registrant must write the name for the registrant. The individual assisting the registrant must indicate the action by signing their name immediately after the space for the registrant’s signature or mark. TCA § 2-2-119.
- Does state require training of voter registration workers?
 - No.
- Does state require registration of voter registration drives?
 - No.
- Any requirement that group must provide information to voters about how they may contact the group to determine the status of their registration?
 - No.
- May group pay voter registration drive workers? If so, is it permissible to pay on a per-voter-registered basis?
 - Tennessee law does not address this issue.

CONTACT INFORMATION FOR STATE AND LOCAL AGENCIES

**Tennessee Secretary of State
Elections
312 Rosa L. Parks Ave.
Nashville, TN 37243-1102
1-877-850-4959 / (615) -741-7956**

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FOR FURTHER ASSISTANCE

For assistance regarding these resources or for more information about federal law, please contact our attorney one-on-one counseling service:

**Email: Advocacy@afj.org
Telephone: 1-866-NPLOBBY
(675-6229)**

For assistance regarding state law in Tennessee, please contact:

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