

# TEACHER GUIDE - YOUTH VOTER REGISTRATION

Thank you for partnering with the League of Women Voters of Indianapolis to help students register to vote! We could not do this important work without you.

## The League of Women Voters of Indianapolis – Who are we?

The League of Women Voters is one of the oldest grassroots organizations in the US, founded on February 14, 1920. The Indianapolis chapter was also formed on this day. League membership is open to any gender, ages 16 and up. The League has chapters in all 50 states and in more than 700 communities.

The LWV's core mission focuses on voter education and voter access. We are **nonpartisan** (not Republican, Democrat, nor Independent). We never endorse or oppose political candidates or parties. We do advocate for a variety of issues, most notably voting rights and redistricting reform, also known as gerrymandering. To learn more, visit [lwvindy.org](http://lwvindy.org) or [lwv.org](http://lwv.org).

If you have questions, please contact us at [voterservice@lwvindy.org](mailto:voterservice@lwvindy.org).

## Youth Voters in Indiana

For more than a decade, Indiana has ranked in the bottom 10 states for voter turnout. Youth voting is particularly low in Indiana. While many states experienced an increase in youth voter registration in 2020, an analysis from Tufts University showed **Indiana's youth voters, ages 18-24, exhibited a staggering 54% decline in voter registration** when comparing August 2020 with November 2016 registrations. **This was the largest decline in the nation.**

The reasons for low youth voter turnout are complicated and varied. Some reasons that youth voters give for not registering (or not voting) include the following:

- They may feel **intimidated or unsure of the process**. First-time voters do not know the basics of registration, how to cast a ballot, when elections happen, or where to find candidate information. You can help remove barriers by sharing information. If interested, the LWV-Indy delivers presentations in high schools covering the basics of voter registration and voting.
- Youth voters do not often know there is a deadline to register to vote. Many intend to vote but **miss the registration deadline** (30 days before Election Day in Indiana). This is further compounded by not updating their registration when they move, and younger adults are more likely to move than older adults.
- Youth voters do not **believe their vote will make a difference**. Many elections are decided on less than one percentage point, and there are many examples of where a handful of votes, or even one vote, decided an election. Predictions and polls are not always accurate! Encourage students to cast their vote.
- Youth voters **may not trust the system**. We need to reassure them that our election system is secure. Encourage them to learn about the process. Students can be poll workers at age 16.
- Finally, youth voters **need to be asked** to vote. In fact, research shows that, on average, people need to be asked 6 times before they finally register and vote. Once a person votes, they are more likely to repeat that behavior and become lifelong voters. Be the catalyst!

## Materials & Procedure

You should have the following materials (\*indicates digital delivery):

- Youth Voter Registration – Teacher Guide\*
- Youth Voter Registration – Student Handout
- Youth Voter Registration – Post Registration Survey
- Voter Registration Flyer\*
- Federal Voter Registration Application & IN County Voter Registration Offices
- Student Residency Handout
- Pledge Cards
- Registration Stickers
- Return Envelope

The basic process is outlined below with detailed information throughout the document.

1. Distribute flyers a few days before registration; students need their ID or last 4 digits of SSN.
2. Students register to vote online (if they have the appropriate ID) or using a paper form.
3. Students complete pledge cards.
4. Teachers return materials to office for pickup (forms, pledge cards, survey).

## Voter Registration Eligibility

In Indiana, you can apply to register to vote if you:

- are a US Citizen.
- are 18 on or before the next November General Election: November 8, 2022.
- are a resident of your precinct (current home address) at least 30 days prior to Election Day.
- not currently imprisoned after being convicted of a crime.

**Age at Registration:** In Indiana, you must be 18 by the next General Election in order to register to vote. These same students (those who will be 18 on or before November 8, 2022) can vote in the Primary Election on May 3, 2022, even if they are only 17 at the time.

**Residency:** To vote in the precinct associated with a voter’s address, the voter must have lived in that precinct for at least 30 days prior to Election Day. If a voter moves within that 30-day period, they may be able to vote in the precinct corresponding to their prior address. For information about where to vote, the student may call the Marion County Election Board at 317-327-5100.

**Felons and Voting:** There is a misconception that felons cannot vote. This is not accurate. In Indiana, voting rights are restored upon release from jail or prison following a conviction of a crime. Those individuals must re-register once released. Individuals on parole, probation, home detention, or people who are in jail awaiting trial can vote. People who are in a community corrections program, such as work release or electronic monitoring, can vote. Questions can be directed to the Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights Hotline at 866-687-8683.

## Voter Registration – Online Method

Completing a voter registration application takes less than 5 minutes. **If students have a valid Indiana Driver’s License, Learner’s Permit, or State ID, they can register to vote online at [indianavoters.in.gov](http://indianavoters.in.gov).** They simply need to scroll down and click on the “Register to Vote/Apply Now” button to begin. If a student does not have the appropriate ID, they cannot register online.

The website will ask them if they would like to enter two-factor authentication or proceed without doing so. The process is fairly straightforward, and the students will enter their information as they move through the screen.

## Voter Registration – Paper Method

If utilizing a paper form, we strongly recommend using the national form. The form, and accompanying instructions, is available for download in 15 languages at [eac.gov/voters/national-mail-voter-registration-form](http://eac.gov/voters/national-mail-voter-registration-form).

**The top half must be completed with all current information. Use black or blue ink.**

### Top Left (2 Questions):

Are you a citizen of the United States?

“Yes” box must be checked to be eligible to vote.

Will you be 18 years old on or before the next General Election (11/08/22) day?

“Yes” box must be checked to be eligible to vote.

**Box 1** - First and Last name MUST be entered. This is the voter’s legal name, *as it appears on their Indiana driver’s license or state ID*. Title, middle name, and suffix is optional.

**Box 2** - This line must contain the voter’s complete home address, including zip code. (A P.O. Box is not acceptable as a residence. If a person receives mail at another location other than where they reside, they can enter that information in Box 3.

**Box 4** - Date of birth must be entered.

**Box 5** - Although a telephone number is optional, this is *highly encouraged!* If there is a question on the form, this is one avenue that the Marion County Voters Board of Registration has to contact the individual.

**Box 6** - The preferred ID number is the number on the Indiana Driver’s license, learner’s permit, or state ID (red number with 2 dashes). An alternative number can be the LAST 4 digits of the person’s social security number. If the registrant has none of these (rare), they can enter the word *none*.

**Box 7 & 8** - OMIT! This is NOT required in Indiana.

**Box 9** – The form must be signed and dated. The signature should be their legal signature, similar to the one on their Indiana driver’s license or Indiana State ID. In fact, they verify a “signature match” with what is on this ID when voting. Enter today’s date.

**The bottom half is usually only completed when individuals are updating information and rarely used when registering for the first time.**

**BOX A&B** - If someone has already registered but has moved or changed their name, they enter their old/prior name or address in the appropriate space. For example, if the individual has changed their name, they enter their PRIOR name in Box A. If the individual is updating their address, they enter their PRIOR address in Box B.

**BOX C** – If a person lives in a rural area without an address or is homeless, they can mark a physical location where they typically “live.” If necessary, this is used for new or updated applications.

**BOX D** - If a registrant is unable to physically complete the form on their own (low vision, other disabilities) and asks for assistance, the person who has completed the form for them must declare this in Box D.

**Please scrutinize forms for errors. The most common errors include:**

- Not checking BOTH the US Citizen and Age 18 boxes.
- Switching the DOB with Today’s Date and vice versa.

- Not signing the form.
- Not entering the complete address, including zip code.

## Pledge Cards

Please encourage students to complete pledge cards. We safeguard their information and will only contact them via text message or email prior to the next election, and they can opt out at any time. This timely communication allows us to share vital information about registration verification, voting locations, and other information crucial to informed voters. This additional “touch” increases the likelihood of voting.

## Common Questions about Voter Registration

### When is the registration deadline?

The registration application must be completed online, postmarked or hand delivered at least 29 days ahead of Election Day. The registration deadline for the Primary Election on May 3, 2022 is Monday, April 4, 2022. The registration deadline for the General Election on November 8, 2022 is Monday, October 10, 2022.

Please encourage students to register TODAY even if they are unsure of wanting to vote. Unfortunately, people often wait until the last minute and then are unable to vote. Indiana has one of the longest registration closure windows in the US.

### How can I verify my voter registration?

Students should receive a confirmation of their registration in the mail (small postcard) from the Secretary of State within 30 days of receipt of their application. Alternatively, students may verify their registration by going to [www.indianavoters.in.gov](http://www.indianavoters.in.gov) and clicking on the “Check Voting Status” option. Students may also call the Marion County Election Board (317-327-5100) to ask about their status.

We highly recommend verifying your voter registration before each election to ensure accuracy. (Registration rolls are purged occasionally, and a voter may erroneously be removed from the rolls. This is not a common occurrence.)

### Do you have to re-register or update your voter registration?

If you move or change your name you *must* update your registration. To be eligible to vote in an upcoming election, you must update your registration 29 days ahead of Election Day. Provided you have an acceptable ID, you can do this online. If not, you can use a paper form.

In Indiana, if you have been convicted of a crime and imprisoned, you must re-register once you are released.

### Does moving away to attend college or university mean I have to update my registration?

In Indiana, college students can either choose their college address or their prior home address as their residence and vote accordingly. Refer to the Student Residency handout for more information.

## Election Ready?

### When are the upcoming elections?

If you are registered to vote and have lived in your precinct for at least 30 days before the election you will get to vote in the Primary Election on **May 3, 2022** and the General Election on **November 8, 2022**.

### What offices are on the ballot in 2022?

Hoosiers will vote to elect representatives to send to Washington, D.C. This includes one of our two US Senators; the other senator will be up for re-election in 2024. All 9 US House of Representatives from Indiana will be on the ballot, and students will vote for the representative in their district. There will be other important state, city and local offices on the ballot.

### Do I have the appropriate ID to vote in Indiana?

Indiana has an identification law that pertains to voting. If you vote in person, you *must* show an approved ID. The most commonly used ID is an Indiana Driver's License or State ID card. You can request a free state-issued ID for the purposes of voting at the BMV. For approved ID's, go to [indianavoters.in.gov](http://indianavoters.in.gov).

### Besides [indianavoters.in.gov](http://indianavoters.in.gov), where can I find more information on registration and voting, including candidate information?

[VOTE411.org](http://VOTE411.org) is a one-stop-shop for everything voting, powered by the League of Women Voters. In 2020, the site won a Webby People's Voice Award for the Best Government & Civil Innovation Website. This is an amazing source for candidate information, all the way down to the local level (depending upon location). Candidate responses to League questions populate approximately 3-4 weeks before Election Day.

## Instructions for Returning Materials & Sharing Your Success

**Please insert all registration applications, pledge cards, and the registration total form in the envelope provided.** A representative of the LWV of Indianapolis will collect the envelope from your school's main office and deliver the registration forms to the appropriate Board of Elections. Per Indiana law, if a first-time registrant mails their voter registration application (instead of hand delivers), proof of residency documents may be required. Hand delivery circumvents this additional requirement.

If a student wishes to mail their own form (or deliver the form in person) to their county registration office, it must arrive no later than noon on the 10th day past the completion date (today's date field). The addresses for the appropriate county registration office can be found on the back of the registration form.

### **Please share your success of registering youth voters on social media and tag us!**

Facebook: League of Women Voters of Indianapolis, Twitter: @LWVofINDY, and Instagram: lwvindy