

# GEORGIA VOTER REGISTRATION GUIDE

These resources are current as of 2/28/19. 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](mailto:advocacy@afj.org).

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**This guide summarizes key aspects of laws governing voter registration on the Georgia 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 activities. Check with the appropriate local jurisdiction before undertaking any activity.**

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# DEADLINES FOR REGISTRATION

**Georgia's deadline for registration is 28 days prior to the next election.**

- Specifically, a voter must register no later than the 5<sup>th</sup> Monday prior to the next election. Mail in registrations must be postmarked by this deadline. *O.C.G.A. § 21-2-224(a)*.

**Does Georgia allow by-mail registration?**

- A person may register in advance, in person, online, or by mail by completing a registration application. *O.C.G.A. § 21-2-220(a)*, *O.C.G.A. § 21-2-223*.
  - To register online:
    - <https://registertovote.sos.ga.gov/GAOLVR/welcometoga.do#no-back-button>
  - To download and print a registration form:
    - [https://registertovote.sos.ga.gov/GAOLVR/images/reg\\_form.pdf](https://registertovote.sos.ga.gov/GAOLVR/images/reg_form.pdf)
  - To obtain a paper copy of the Georgia voter registration application, a voter should contact their local county board of registrar's office or election office.
    - To locate a county board of registrar's office, visit:  
<http://elections.sos.ga.gov/Elections/countyregistrars.do>
    - To locate a county election office, visit:  
<http://elections.sos.ga.gov/Elections/countyelectionoffices.do>

**Does Georgia offer Election Day registration?**

- No.

**May a voter register before turning 18?**

- Yes. A voter may register to vote six months before turning 18. *O.C.G.A. § 21-2-216(c)*.

# PHOTO ID REQUIREMENTS

**Required for registration? If so, what kinds of ID?**

- While photo identification is not required, Georgia law requires evidence of U.S. citizenship along with an application for voter registration. Many of the acceptable forms of verification take the form of a photo ID. See below for more details.

**Requirement to provide proof of citizenship to register to vote?**

- Georgia voters may present evidence of U.S. citizenship either with an application for voter registration or at their polling place subsequent to submitting an application for voter registration. This typically takes the form of the last four digits of the applicant's social security number, or the applicant's state issued driver's license or state identification card number.
- If an applicant for registration does not supply proof of citizenship with an application for registration, the prospective voter's application is considered "pending." The applicant can vote, but must present the following when voting at their polling location:

- proof of citizenship (*see below*); and
- an acceptable form of photo identification. (*see below*)
- If an applicant did not provide proof of citizenship, or if the applicant receives notice that their voter registration status is pending, the applicant may status would like to vote via absentee ballot, the applicant must provide a photo id and proof of citizenship upon requesting an absentee ballot.
- Proof of citizenship includes the following: *O.C.G.A. § 21-2-216(a)(2), O.C.G.A. § 21-2-216(g)(1)-(2), Ga. Comp. R. & Regs. 183-1-6-.06.*
  - A verified Georgia driver’s license number, or identification card number;
  - Birth certificate;
  - U.S. Passport;
  - United States Naturalization Documents or Verified Alien Registration Number;
  - Bureau of Indian Affairs Card Number, Tribal Treaty Card Number, or Tribal Enrollment Number.
- Acceptable forms of identification include: *O.C.G.A. § 21-2-417(a)(1)-(6).*
  - any valid state or federal government issued photo ID;
  - Georgia Driver's License, even if expired;
  - valid employee photo ID from any branch, department, agency, or entity of the U.S. Government, Georgia, or any county, municipality, board, authority or other entity of this state;
  - valid U.S. passport ID;
  - Valid U.S. military photo ID; or
  - Valid tribal photo ID.

**Required for voting? If so, what kinds of ID?**

- Georgia law requires Georgia residents to show photo identification when voting in person. *O.C.G.A. § 21-2-417(a).*
  - If a voter does not bring one of the six acceptable forms of photo ID the voter will be able to cast a provisional ballot. *O.C.G.A. § 21-2-417(b).*

## VOTER REGISTRATION DRIVES

**Does state accept National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) registration forms? Any restrictions?**

- Yes, Georgia accepts NVRA forms. Be sure to instruct those using the NVRA form to consult the Georgia specific instructions on the form for more information.
- If an applicant does not include a Georgia driver’s license number, identification card number, or the last four digits of the applicant’s social security number, the applicant will be notified and placed on a “pending” list. *See "Requirement to provide proof of citizenship to register to vote?" section above for details.*

**May groups “cage” completed registration applications (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 the data included on them? If so, any deadlines for sending the completed forms to the state or to local officials?**

- Yes. An organization conducting a voter registration drive may ask voters to mail completed voter registration applications back to the organization, who will in turn

mail those registrations to the appropriate election officials.

- Georgia law directs that county registrars should not reject or refuse to process a voter registration application solely on the basis of how or by whom it was submitted. *Ga. Comp. R. & Regs. 183-1-6-.02(3)(a)*, see also *Ga. Att’y Gen Op. No. 2016-02 (June 15, 2016)*.
- Organizations are required to inform applicants for registration that: *Ga. Comp. R. & Regs. 183-1-6-.02(6)*. Notification of the following can be achieved through posting a sign in a conspicuous place.
  - They have the option to return their voter registration application personally to the appropriate board of registrars or to the Secretary of State, or to permit the private entity to return it on the applicant’s behalf;
  - Inform all applicants that they are not officially registered to vote until their eligibility has been determined by the appropriate board of registrars and that, if the applicant has not received notification of the disposition of the application within three to four weeks of submitting the application, the applicant should contact the appropriate board of registrars;
  - Inform all applicants that, if they are registering to vote for the first time in a new location by mail or through a private entity, they must present current and valid identification either when registering to vote by mail or through a private entity or when voting for the first time after registering;
  - Inform all Georgia applicants of the availability of an online registration status check and polling place locator service on the Secretary of State’s website;
  - Inform all applicants of their right, under certain circumstances, to cast a provisional ballot if their name does not appear on the official list of registered voters.
- An organization **cannot** copy or retain a completed registration application without the express, written permission of the applicant. *Ga. Comp. R. & Regs. 183-1-6-.02(7)(g)*, *Ga. Comp. R. & Regs. 183-1-6-.02(9)(b)*.
- An organization **can**, however, create and keep a separate record of any information contained on the applicant’s voter registration application that could otherwise be made available for public inspection if collected and maintained by the Secretary of State on the official list of electors. *Ga. Comp. R. & Regs. 183-1-6-.02(9)(b)*, *O.C.G.A. § 21-2-225(b)*.
  - This information cannot be used for commercial purposes and must be discarded via secure means.
- An organization must deliver completed registration application within 10 days of receiving the application. *Ga. Comp. R. & Regs. 183-1-6-.02(8)(a)*. If the organization receives the registration 14 days or less before the close of registration, the organization must deliver the completed application for registration within 72 hours of receiving the application. *Id.*

**May a group “pre-fill” some or all of a voter registration application before sending/giving it to a would-be registrant?**

- Georgia law is silent on this issue.

### **May voter registration drive workers assist a voter in completing their registration applications?**

- Georgia law expressly permits individuals with a disability to be assisted by a designated individual. Registration assistance includes reading the registration application and instructions, and filling out the application according to the directions of the registrant. *O.C.G.A. § 21-2-385.*
  - Anyone who provides assistance to an illiterate or disabled applicant by completing any written portion of the application on the applicant's behalf must also sign the voter registration application in the space provided to identify the person offering assistance.
- The statute is silent as to whether workers may assist other voters. However, according to the Secretary of State, workers can help voters fill out registration applications and, with the voter's permission, can mail or drop off the form on his or her behalf. A worker can also help voters fill out online applications so long as it is done with the voter's consent and in his or her presence. *Ga. Att'y Gen Op. No. 2016-02 (June 15, 2016).*

### **Does state require training of voter registration workers?**

- No. Georgia does not have any specific statutes that regulate voter registration drives or require training for individuals who register others to voter. Training from the Secretary of State's office is available by request.

### **Does state require registration of voter registration drives? If so, for by-mail drives, too?**

- No. Georgia does not have any specific statutes regulating voter registration drives and does not require training for individuals who participate in voter registration drives or register others to vote.

### **Any requirement that a group must provide information to voters about how they may contact the group to determine the status of their registration?**

- No. Georgia does not require groups to provide information to voters about how the assisting organization can be contacted to determine the status of their registration. But, Georgia law requires organizations to, among other things: *Ga. Comp. R. & Regs. 183-1-6-.02(6).*
  - Inform all applicants that they are not officially registered to vote until their eligibility has been determined by the appropriate board of registrars and that, if the applicant has not received notification of the disposition of the application within three to four weeks of submitting the application, the applicant should contact the appropriate board of registrars; and
  - Inform all Georgia applicants of the availability of an online registration status check and polling place locator service on the Secretary of State's website.

### **May a group pay voter registration drive workers? If so, is it permissible to pay on a per-voter-registered basis?**

- Yes. Georgia law is silent on this issue- organizations may compensate workers for registering voters.

# CONTACT INFORMATION FOR STATE AND LOCAL AGENCIES

## Georgia Government Transparency and Campaign Finance Commission

200 Piedmont Avenue SE  
Suite 1416, West Tower Atlanta,  
Georgia 30334

Telephone: (404) 463-1980  
Fax: (404) 463-1988  
Commission Email: [gaethics@ethics.ga.gov](mailto:gaethics@ethics.ga.gov)  
Website: <http://ethics.ga.gov/>

Executive Director

To locate a county board of registrar's office, visit:  
<http://elections.sos.ga.gov/Elections/countyregistrars.do>

To locate a county election office, visit:  
<http://elections.sos.ga.gov/Elections/countyelectionoffices.do>

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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](mailto:advocacy@afj.org) Telephone: 1-866-NPLOBBY (675-6229)

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