

INTERNAL DOCUMENT

The Vermont Department of Corrections (DOC) is committed to ensuring inmates are informed of their right to vote in any primary or general election in which they are qualified to vote. This document shall:

1. Provide guidance to staff on the qualification requirements for an inmate to vote while incarcerated;
2. Outline various ways the DOC shall inform and aid offenders in exercising their right to vote; and
3. Inform staff of their responsibilities in assisting inmates with their right to vote.

Informing Inmates of Their Right to Vote:

The DOC shall take an active role in informing inmates of their right to vote, as well as how to exercise that right while incarcerated.

1. The Inmate Law Libraries and Community High School of Vermont (CHSVT) Libraries shall have an Inmate Voter Instructional Guide document available for interested inmates at all times.
 - a. This document shall provide information to inmates concerning:
 - i. Important dates and deadlines;
 - ii. Registration requirements and instructions;
 - iii. How to request and cast absentee ballots while incarcerated; and
 - iv. Direction on who to direct any additional questions they may have.
 - b. The Volunteer Services Coordinator (VSC) or designee shall ensure this document is updated every other year, coinciding with the election cycle, and the updated version is administered to the law libraries and high school.
2. The DOC shall hold Voter Informational and Registration Clinics every other year, coinciding with election cycles.
 - a. The clinic shall be held at least ninety days prior to the election, to allow adequate time for mailed registrations to be received by the Town or City Clerks, and absentee ballots to be requested.
 - b. This clinic shall inform inmates of:
 - i. The unique ability to vote while incarcerated, in comparison to most other states;
 - ii. Important dates and deadlines;
 - iii. Registration requirements and instructions; and
 - iv. Guidance on how to request and cast absentee ballots while incarcerated.
 - c. The VSC or designee shall be in charge of promoting and conducting the clinic.
 - i. VSCs shall use the clinic promotional template provided as part of this policy, updating the relevant dates, times, and locations.

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Qualified Voters:

An inmate who is already a registered Vermont voter will only need to request an absentee ballot from the town clerk where they are registered to vote.

An inmate who has not previously registered to vote in Vermont:

1. Must be a citizen of the United States.
2. Must be a resident of Vermont.
 - a. Inmates are prohibited from using a DOC facility address as their address to register to vote.
 - b. Inmate must provide their last voluntary address as their address when they register to vote.
3. Must be 18 before or on the day of the election.

Registering Voters:

1. The voting clinic shall also serve as a voter registration drive.
 - a. Registration forms shall be available for qualified inmates to register to vote.
 - a. Registration forms can be requested by emailing sos.voterreg@sec.state.vt.us.
 - b. The VSC or designee shall be available to help inmates fill out the registration forms.
 - a. If an inmate is submitting a paper registration, and is registering for the first time, he or she must submit a copy of a:
 - i. Valid photo ID (driver's license, passport, or Inmate ID); or
 - ii. Utility bill, bank statement, or government document with their last voluntary address.
 - b. To obtain the necessary documents, inmates may request the document be sent into the facility with instructions that a copy be made and provided to the appropriate VSC, Recreation Coordinator, or Facility Corrections Service Specialist (CSS).
 - c. Inmates shall be provided with the appropriate address to mail their completed registrations.
 - d. The VSC or designee may also access the [online voter registration webpage](#) and work with the inmate to fill out the online registration.
 - a. Inmates are not permitted to go online; the VSC, designee, or Facility CSS must be the one actively filling out the form using information provided by the inmate.
 - b. Online registration does not require individuals to provide a hard copy of the required documentation (Valid photo ID: driver's license, passport, Inmate ID, utility bill, bank statement, or government document with their last voluntary address), and therefore may be an easier option for many inmates.

Note: Inmates may register to vote before or after the Voting Clinic by working with a VSC, CHVT Educational staff, or their CSS.

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Obtaining an Absentee Ballot:

1. To obtain an absentee ballot, inmates must contact, in writing, the Town or City Clerk of the town or city in which he or she is registered to vote and request the absentee ballot.
 - a. Inmates shall request the address of the appropriate [Town or City Clerk](#) from a VSC, Recreation Coordinator, or CSS, which staff shall provide to any inmate who requests.
2. It is the responsibility of the inmate to request the absentee ballot.
3. The ballot will arrive with a return envelope so that the ballot, once voted, can be returned to the clerk and safely stored to be counted on Election Day.
 - a. The clerk must receive the ballot by the close of polls on Election Day in order for it to be counted.
4. A ballot can be requested any time before an election.
 - a. Clerks will mail absentee ballots as soon as they are available, but it is recommended that absentee ballots be requested at least 45 days prior to an election.

Out of State Inmates:

Vermont inmates who are incarcerated in a different state shall retain all of the voting rights as Vermont inmates who are incarcerated in state, as long as they meet all of the other voting requirements detailed above.

1. The CSSs shall inform inmates of their right to vote, review all voter registration requirements, answer any questions an inmate may have, and provide them with a copy of the updated Inmate Voter Instructional Guide.
 - a. This shall happen at least ninety days before any primary or general election.
2. Inmates who are housed out of state, and wish to register to vote, shall do so with the help of their CSS. CSSs shall:
 - a. Assist the inmate in completing and submitting the paper registration, including gathering the necessary documentation; or
 - b. Access the online registration and work with the inmate to complete the electronic registration, which does not require the additional residency documentation.
3. Out of state inmates should follow the same procedure for requesting absentee ballots as detailed above.
 - a. Inmates shall have access to the Inmate Voter Instructional Guide which details how to request an absentee ballot, once registered to vote in Vermont.