

# ELECTIONS



## Chapter 10

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## ELECTION DATES AND FILING DEADLINES

### School Elections

School elections are held annually on the second Tuesday in September. Nominating petitions are filed with the school secretary not more than 64 days nor less than 40 days before the date of the election.

### City Elections

City elections are held on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November of each odd-numbered year. Some cities hold primary elections four weeks before the regular election and some cities hold runoff elections four weeks after the regular city election.

Nominating petitions for cities with primary elections are filed not more than 85 days nor less than 67 days before the date of the election. Nominating petitions for other cities are filed with the city clerk not more than 71 days nor less than 47 days before the date of the election.

### Primary Elections

Primary elections are held on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in June of each even-numbered year for the members of political parties to nominate candidates for the general election ballot. A political party is defined in state law as a party which, at the last preceding general election, cast for its candidate for U.S. President or Governor, as applicable, at least 2 percent of the total vote cast for that office at that election.

Candidates for federal, statewide, and legislative offices must file their nomination petitions with the Secretary of State not more than 99 days nor less than 81 days before the date of the election.

Nomination petitions for county offices must be filed with the county auditor in the appropriate county not more than 92 days nor less than 69 days before the date of the election.

### General Elections

General elections are held on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November of each even-numbered year.

Candidates for offices to be filled at the general election may also be nominated by petition or by nonparty political organizations. Candidates for county and township offices file with the county auditor in the appropriate county.

After the primary election, political parties may make nominations by convention for offices for which there was no one nominated at the primary or to fill vacancies on the general election ballot caused by the withdrawal or death of primary election nominees. The last day to file is the same as the deadline for nonpartisan nominations.

Nomination forms are free and may be obtained from the office where the papers are to be filed. There are no filing fees for any office.

## ABSENTEE VOTING

Any registered voter may vote by absentee ballot. You do not need to give a specific reason or explanation for voting by absentee ballot on the absentee ballot application.

Voting by absentee ballot includes voting by mail, in person at the county auditor's office, in person at a satellite voting station prior to election day, or by having a ballot delivered to you if you live at a health care facility or are a patient in a hospital.

To vote in person prior to an election, you may go to the county auditor's office or a satellite voting station. You cannot take the ballot home with you. The county auditor's office is open on the Saturday before primary and general elections. On election day, you may not vote by absentee ballot at the county auditor's office or a satellite voting station.

To vote by mail, you must request a ballot early enough before election day to allow time for your ballot to be mailed to you and for you to return your ballot to the county auditor on time.

You must request an absentee ballot in writing using an “Official Absentee Ballot Request Form.” You may call the county auditor’s office or the Office of Secretary of State to request that the form be mailed to you. The request form can also be obtained online at the Secretary of State’s website and at some county auditors’ websites. The request for an absentee ballot may be sent by fax to the county auditor’s office. However, you must also mail the original request to the county auditor and it must be postmarked before election day. E-mail absentee ballot applications cannot be accepted.

A request for the county auditor to mail an absentee ballot must be received by the auditor no later than 5 p.m. on the Friday before the election. The ballot will be mailed to you as soon as it is ready. For primary and general elections, ballots are required by law to be ready no later than 40 days before the election. For other elections, absentee ballots are made available as soon as possible. Check with the county auditor’s office for the specific date. If your absentee ballot request is received after the ballots are printed, it will be mailed within 24 hours. If your ballot is delayed, check with the county auditor’s office to be sure that the request was received.

Voted absentee ballots may be returned by mail or in person. Absentee ballots need not be witnessed or notarized. If returned by mail, ballots must be postmarked no later than the day before the election and received by the county auditor no later than noon on the Monday following the primary election, general election, and most other elections. The deadline is earlier for school elections and elections for cities with runoff provisions. If returned in person to the county auditor’s office, the ballot may be delivered by the voter, by an immediate family member of the voter, or by an absentee ballot courier who has received the appropriate training and who is registered with the county auditor’s office. If returned in person, ballots must be returned no later than the time the polls close for that election. Absentee ballots should not be returned to polling places unless the person who requested the ballot wants to vote at the polls instead. No absentee ballots delivered to the polling places will be counted.

Special provisions are made for voters who are members of the U.S. armed forces, who are overseas, or who are patients in hospitals or other health care facilities.

For more information contact: Office of the Secretary of State, Lucas State Office Building, Des Moines 50319; [www.sos.state.ia.us](http://www.sos.state.ia.us); (515) 281-5760 voice or TDD, or call 1 (888) SOS-VOTE; or your county auditor.

## VOTER REGISTRATION

You may register to vote by postcard form or in person if:

1. You are a citizen of the United States.
2. You are a resident of Iowa.
3. You will be at least 18 years old on or before election day.

If you are 17 1/2 years old, you may register to vote, but your registration will not be effective until your 18th birthday.

If you move within the county where you are registered to vote, you may change your address before the close of registration:

1. By notifying the county auditor in writing. Include your full name as it appears on the voter registration records, your old and new addresses, and your signature. If more than one person is submitting a change, each person must sign the notice.
2. By completing a postcard registration form. Only one change may be submitted on each postcard.
3. By making the change in person at the county auditor’s office or other registration sites.

For primary and general elections, registration closes at 5 p.m. 10 days before the election. For all other elections, registration closes at 5 p.m. 11 days before the election.

For more information contact: Voter Registration, Lucas State Office Building, Des Moines 50319; [www.sos.state.ia.us](http://www.sos.state.ia.us); (515) 281-5781 voice or TDD, or call 1 (888) SOS-VOTE; or your county auditor.

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**Election Results**

For election results, access the Secretary of State's website at <http://www.sos.state.ia.us/elections/results/index.html>.

**IOWA DEMOCRATIC PARTY**

*5661 Fleur Drive, Des Moines 50321; (515) 244-7292;  
www.iowademocrats.org*

**REPUBLICAN PARTY OF IOWA**

*621 East Ninth Street, Des Moines 50309; (515) 282-8105;  
www.iowagop.org*