



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF NEW MEXICO

VOTING AND ELECTION INFORMATION

Your Voice — Your Vote!

Elect Your Leaders! Make Democracy Work!

Vote on Candidates, Ballot Questions, Laws, and Funding

Elections are held so that eligible voters can select candidates for office and decide for or against taxes and mill levies, proposed laws or policies, and amendments (changes) to a city charter or a state constitution. Learn about the issues and ballot questions and consider whether you and others will want to live with those decisions for many years.

For most elections, the League of Women Voters produces nonpartisan (fair, neutral) *Voter Guides* with information about candidates and issues. We also sponsor candidate forums and fact sheets. See www.lwvnm.org and consult local newspapers or public libraries for information on voter guides and candidate forums.

Find out where the candidates stand on issues that are important to you. Read about their experience and the goals they want to accomplish if they are elected. Try to attend or watch candidate forums, where candidates answer questions and talk about their qualifications and plans.

REGISTERING TO VOTE

In order to register to vote in New Mexico, you must be a U.S. citizen, with a social security number, and at least 18 years old. You can register before you're 18 as long as your birthday is on or before the next election. **Registration is open until 28 days before an election. Register to vote online or update your registration through the NM Secretary of State's website <http://sos.state.nm.us/> if you have a NM Driver's License or a state ID issued by the NM Motor Vehicles Division. To register online and for more information, visit http://www.sos.state.nm.us/Voter_Information/.**

To confirm your registration, find out your precinct, district, and other voting information, visit <https://voterview.state.nm.us/>. You can also register through a voter registrar or by going to your County Clerk's office or other voter registration site, such as a library or college.

Two exceptions: An individual who has been legally declared mentally incapacitated may not register. An individual who has been convicted of a felony loses the right to vote while completing the terms and conditions imposed by the court. After completing the sentence, the individual must re-register to vote.

VOTER ID

Each time you vote, you are required to state or write your name, address, and year of birth. When voting for the first time, you will need to show either your driver's license, student or tribal ID, bank statement, utility bill, or paycheck showing your name and current address. PHOTO IDs are required in a few municipalities for their elections only--not for general or primary elections.

COMMON VOTING TERMS

Absentee Voting - A way to vote by mail instead of going to a polling place. In New Mexico, you do not need to supply a reason when requesting an absentee ballot from your County Clerk, but you must do so 5 days before Election Day to ensure timely mail delivery. Before early voting begins and through the Friday before Election Day, an eligible voter may vote absentee in-person at the County Clerk's office.

Ballot - The physical or electronic document on which a voter's choices are recorded. NM has paper ballots, which are tabulated electronically and verified manually.

Bond Elections - Voters are asked to support taxes on their property to pay for services through bond elections. Local governments, school districts and charter schools, and public colleges/universities can hold bond elections.

Constitutional Amendment - An addition or change to the state constitution, which requires a majority vote of the people. A Constitutional Amendment proposal is the result of a joint resolution by both chambers of the NM Legislature. The ballot goes from the Legislature to the voters without the Governor's approval. See much more about the legislative process on www.nmlegis.gov and find out more about how to be involved on www.lwvnm.org/action.

Early Voting- Starts the third Saturday before an election. Voters can go to early voting locations or to their County Clerk's office to vote early. For municipal (city/town) elections, the situation varies. On Election Day, you must vote at the polling place for your assigned precinct or at a Vote Center. See Absentee Voting.

General Elections -Every two years in even-numbered years, there are General Elections. In years divisible by 4, there is a General Election for federal/national offices and for some state, regional, and county offices and for ballot questions. In the other even-numbered years, there are statewide General Elections for other specific state, regional, and county offices and other ballot questions. In New Mexico, primary elections are held five months before Election Day to determine who the finalists are for the federal, state, county, and district offices. These elections are held the Tuesday after the first Monday in June. General Elections are held the Tuesday after the first Monday in November.

Home Rule Charters- Some cities and towns (also known as municipalities) have charters that describe how their government operates. Charters may be changed/amended at an election.

Initiative - In New Mexico, some municipalities have home rule charters that allow them to put an initiative (an issue) on a ballot for voters to consider.

Metropolitan, Municipal, School, and College Elections-These elections may be for candidates and/or ballot questions. Rules vary depending on the kind of election and the governmental entity.

Political Party- An organization that nominates candidates for public office. It is the responsibility of each political party that seeks to attain power within a government to define its priorities. Democrats and Republicans are the largest political parties in New Mexico. Sometimes, other parties may also qualify to be on the ballot.

Polls - The places where people vote. A voter who goes to the wrong polling place can still vote by provisional ballot at that other polling place. Vote Centers are polling places that accommodate voters from all eligible precincts.

Precinct -A geographic area designated for representation. Your precinct is determined by your address. Candidates who run for offices to represent you must live in your district.

Primaries -Currently only those registered with a political party can vote in a primary to select candidates from that party to run for a general election. In New Mexico, the state primary is held the Tuesday after the first Monday in June in even-numbered years. After winning a primary, the nominees of each party run against each other, with

the winners elected to office. The General Election that follows the primary is held the Tuesday after the first Monday in November. Before Election Day, eligible voters can vote at early voting sites or by mail. Many independent voters and others want New Mexico to have open primaries where voters can select candidates for office. Independents/ "Declined to State" voters currently are not allowed to vote in primary elections. See the list below for the offices who will be on the ballot depending on the year.

Voter Re-Registration/Updates- If you change your address, your party, or decide you do not want to state a party, you should re-register to vote. You must re-register at least 28 days before an election. The easiest way to do it is online through <http://sos.state.nm.us/>

Vote Centers - Voters do not have to vote at their designated polling places on Election Day if there are Vote Centers that provide the service, allowing all eligible voters of that county to vote at more convenient locations.

NATIONAL OFFICES

President and Vice President
United States Senators and House Representatives

STATEWIDE OFFICES

Governor
Lieutenant Governor
Secretary of State
Attorney General, Auditor, Treasurer, Commissioner of Public Lands Supreme Court and Court of Appeals Judges

DISTRICT/REGIONAL OFFICES

State Representatives and Senators
Public Regulation Commissioners
Public Education Commissioners
District Judges
District Attorneys
Board Members for Public Colleges and School Districts (These elections can be combined.)

LOCAL OFFICES

County Officials: Commissioners/Representatives, Clerk, Treasurer, Assessor, Sheriff
City Officials: Mayor, City Councilors, Municipal Judges
Offices of other local governmental entities

VOTE and let your voice be heard! Unleash Your Power! Get your family and friends to vote!!!

Having a strong democracy depends on everyone's participating in getting the best candidates elected and the best laws passed. If you don't vote, you leave those choices up to others. Everyone's vote is equal and important. We don't want to give our country over to those who have lots of money and influence. We need all eligible citizens to have a say in their governments. Don't waste your opportunity to make a difference. Be counted!!

For more information about voting, visit http://www.sos.state.nm.us/Voter_Information/default.aspx#.

Questions? Ask your County Clerk:

http://www.sos.state.nm.us/Voter_Information/County_Clerk_Information.aspx

If your county clerk can't help, you can contact sos.elections@state.nm.us or 800-477-3432.

Contact the League! We're an independent, nonpartisan organization committed to civic improvement. We produce voter guides and conduct candidate forums. See www.lwvnm.org for more information.

League of Women Voters of Central New Mexico	www.lwvcnm.org	505-884-8441
League of Women Voters of Greater Las Cruces	www.lwvglc.org	575-524-8683
League of Women Voters of Los Alamos	www.lwvlosalamos.org	email through website
League of Women Voters of Santa Fe County	www.lwvsfc.org	505-982-9766

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