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1. "WHO CAN VOTE?"

You must be a registered voter in order to vote in the general or primary elections. To register, you must be a United States citizen, be 18 years old by the date of the election you want to vote, live at your present address for at least 30 days before a election, and not claim the right to vote elsewhere. You may **not** register or vote if you have been convicted of a **felony** and: you are *currently incarcerated*; or you are under *parole supervision*.

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2. "WHERE CAN I GET A MAIL-IN VOTER REGISTRATION APPLICATION?"

You can print off a form from this website. ([Registration Form](#)) . Or call us at 315/366-2231 and we will mail you one.

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3. "CAN I REGISTER IN PERSON?"

Yes. Many public agencies are now providing voter registration forms and assistance. You can also register at Board of Elections office at the County Building, North Court Street, Wampsville, NY 13163.

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4. "DO I HAVE TO REGISTER EVERY YEAR?"

No. Once you register in a county, you will remain registered at that address. Name, address or party enrollment changes can be made by submitting a new registration application. If you move outside of the county, you need to re-register in your new county.

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5. "HOW WILL I KNOW WHERE TO VOTE?"

You should receive a postcard from the Board of Elections some time in August, telling you where to vote. Watch for it! It will also indicate your election district number, which you need to

know on Election Day. You can also click on 'Find Your Polling Place' in the left column of this page. Please call our office immediately if you feel the district/pollsite information is incorrect.

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6. "HOW DO CANDIDATES GET ON THE BALLOT?"

In New York State, most candidates get on the ballot by filing a petition containing a specified number of signatures. The required amount varies, depending on the office sought and whether the candidate is seeking a party nomination or a spot on the ballot as an independent. In Madison County a candidate running for town/village offices on the Democratic line will be nominated at a caucus. For more information click on 'Running for Office' in the left column of this page.

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7. "WHO CAN SIGN A PETITION?"

Only enrolled party members may sign petitions for candidates who seek their party's nomination. Party members may sign for only one candidate for a specific elected office. Signing two or more petitions for the same elected office invalidates the signatures. However, any registered voter living within the appropriate district may sign a petition for a candidate seeking to run as an independent in the general election, as long as s/he has not already signed on behalf of another candidate.

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8. "SHOULD I BE CONCERNED ABOUT SIGNING A PETITION?"

Whether or not you sign a petition is a personal choice.

Some people refuse to sign petitions. However, the reluctance to sign petitions makes it difficult for potential candidates without strong political party backing to get the requisite number of signatures and run for elected office. Signing a petition is an important way to participate in the electoral process.

Some people sign candidates' petitions on a first-come-first served basis, without regard for the candidates' political beliefs. This practice can result in you signing a petition for a candidate who doesn't share your political philosophies, and who may have goals in government you oppose.

The best way to participate in the petition process is to become familiar with the candidates before signing. If a candidate, or his/her supporter, whom you are not familiar with approaches you for your signature, you may ask some questions about the candidate's beliefs and goals. Then you will be able to make an informed decision whether or not to sign the candidate's petition.

Signing a petition does not obligate you to vote for the candidate in the Primary or General Election.

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9. "WHAT IS A PRIMARY ELECTION?"

A primary is an election that may take place within each of New York State's official political parties. It precedes the general election and provides enrolled political party members the

opportunity to nominate their party's candidates for elected office as well as to elect various party officials. However, if there is no contest, there is no primary.

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10. "WHY SHOULD I ENROLL IN A POLITICAL PARTY?"

Enrolled party members who help nominate candidates by signing petitions and voting in the primary have greater political clout than non-enrolled voters who can vote only in the general election.

Moreover, you are not obligated to vote for your party's candidate in the general election.

In November, you may vote for any candidate from any party.

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11. "HOW DO I ENROLL IN A POLITICAL PARTY?"

You voluntarily enroll in any party by indicating your preference on the voter registration form either at the same time that you register to vote or by re-registering.

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12. "WHAT HAPPENS IF I CAN'T VOTE ON ELECTION DAY?"

If you will be out of town on Election Day or are physically unable to go to the polls, you can vote by absentee ballot.

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13. "HOW CAN I GET AN ABSENTEE BALLOT?"

Absentee ballot applications can be obtained by calling the Board of Elections at 315/366-2231 or [you may download it now](#).

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14. "WHAT DO I NEED WHEN I GO TO VOTE?"

The majority of voters do not need to bring anything. First time voters who applied by mail, and did not provide us with a verified identification, may be asked to show ID. For those voters who do have to provide ID at the polls, a number of forms will be accepted. Either a current and valid photo identification with the voter's name and picture (such as passports, driver's license, or student identification card), a Social Security number, or else a copy of a current utility bill, bank statement, government check, paycheck or government document that shows the name and address of the voter will be accepted.

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15. "WHAT DO I DO WHEN I GET TO THE POLLING PLACE?"

When you enter the polling place, you'll see sign-in tables for one or more election districts (ED), ballot marking booth(s), and one or more ImageCast voting systems. At the table for your

ED you will be asked to sign next to a facsimile of your original signature on an alphabetical computerized poll-list.

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16. "WHAT IF I'M NOT PERMITTED TO VOTE?"

Please ask the Inspectors to call our office (366-2231) and we can check your eligibility. If you are not on the poll-list, it may be because your registration form was not received or, for a primary, because you aren't enrolled in a party. If you believe that you are eligible, you can still vote. Ask for an affidavit ballot. Or, you can see a judge and ask for a court order to vote on the machine. After the election, the Board of Elections will check its records and your vote will be counted, if you are indeed eligible to vote. If not, you will receive a notice that you are not eligible, along with a registration application for future elections.

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17. "HOW DO I VOTE?"

After signing the pollbook at the Inspector table, you will be handed a paper ballot and a privacy folder and directed to the ballot marking booths. Review the ballot and select your candidates and proposals by completely filling in the voting square by the candidate's name with the marker provided. If you change your mind or make a mistake, you may return the ballot to the Inspectors and receive a new one. Once you are satisfied with your ballot, place it in the ImageCast scanner to cast your vote.

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18. "CAN SOMEONE HELP ME TO VOTE?"

If you need some help because you are disabled or cannot read the ballot, the ImageCast has a Ballot Marking Device (BMD) that allows you to vote the ballot independently with an audio device, tactile controls, and a large monitor. If you prefer to hand-mark the ballot, you may have a friend or relative assist you in the ballot marking booth. Election Inspectors at the polling place are also available to help you.

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19. "IF I REGISTER TO VOTE, WILL I BE CALLED FOR JURY DUTY?"

Jurors are drawn from list of state taxpayers and licensed drivers as well as from voter registration rolls. Do not give up your right to vote in the hope that you will avoid jury duty. Chances are, if you pay taxes or drive a car, you will still be called. Besides, serving on a jury is a privilege, one that permits you to personally stand up for all Americans' right to trial by a jury of their peers.

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20. "HOW CAN I BECOME A POLLWATCHER?"

Any candidate, political party or other body of voters has the right to designate a registered voter within their county of residence to serve as a poll watcher. The chairman of above said parties shall appoint watchers. A signed certificate by one of these groups will serve as sufficient evidence and must be given to the election inspectors. Each watcher must be named on the certificate and separate certificates are needed for each polling place.

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21. "ELECTIONEERING - HOW FAR AWAY FROM THE POLLING PLACE MUST I BE?"

While the polls are open, no person shall do any electioneering within 100 hundred radial feet of the entrance to the polls. There can be no political banner, button, hat, t-shirt, poster or placard within that 100 feet.

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22. CAN I TAKE AN EXIT POLL?

Yes, under the following conditions: Exit polls cannot be conducted **in** the polling place. It **MUST** be conducted outside the 100 ft radial, and the organization must abide by all other rules that apply to electioneering. The poll can not interfere with voting procedures. The organization may only poll voters who are **leaving** the polling place, and thus **have already voted**. The organization must inform the voters that their cooperation is voluntary. Above all, remember that the Board of Elections and its Inspectors have complete control over all activities in and around the polling place. (*Election Law, 8-104*)

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23. HOW DO I CHANGE MY PARTY AFFILIATION?

Registered voters may apply for a change of enrollment personally at the Board of Elections or via mail by the last day of local registration of the year, which is 25 days before the General Election. The new enrollment becomes effective one week after the November General Election of that year. If you make the change less than 25 days before the General Election, the change goes into effect one week after the next year's General Election.

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24. MAY I TAKE MY CHILDREN TO THE POLLSITE?

Yes, any persons younger than the age of 16 on Election Day may accompany a qualified voting parent or guardian into the voting area. The parent or guardian must provide appropriate supervision so that he/she does not interfere with the orderly process of voting. (*Election Law, Conduct of Elections 8-106*)

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25. MUST I PAY MY EMPLOYEES FOR TIME OFF TO VOTE?

Yes, if a registered voter does not have sufficient time outside of his working hours, all

employers must provide a time not to exceed two hours absence from work with pay to let employees vote. Sufficient time consists of 4 consecutive hours either before or after work in conjunction with poll hours.

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26. WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN AN EMERGENCY BALLOT AND AN AFFIDAVIT BALLOT?

An **Emergency** ballot is used if the ImageCast scanner becomes out of order during an election. These ballots are deposited in the Emergency Ballot slot on the ImageCast. If the Imagecast is working again, the ballots may be counted by the scanner at the end of the day (deposited by two Inspectors) and added in with the election night totals.

An **Affidavit** ballot is used when a voter's name has been omitted from the computer generated poll books. These voters must swear that they are a registered voter and provide current and previous address, and at a primary election must include the party in which he/she is enrolled. A voter may also use an affidavit ballot to challenge his/her party enrollment stated in the poll book.

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27. HOW DO I CHANGE MY ADDRESS?

If you have moved within Madison County, fill out a regular [registration form](#) with your new address, and send it to us. After the form is processed, you will receive a new card confirming the change and telling you where your new polling place is. If you move out of Madison County, you need to register in your new County.

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(Thanks to Tompkins County BOE for sharing the FAQ with us)