

State of Illinois

# DEPUTY REGISTRAR GUIDELINES

Issued by the  
Illinois State Board of Elections

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## **PREFACE**

This *Deputy Registrar Guidelines* booklet has been designed to provide information to election officials, labor organizations, civic organizations, and other individuals and organizations participating in the Illinois Deputy Registrar Program. This booklet describes the eligibility requirements and terms of appointment of deputy registrars, as well as their duties and responsibilities. General information about the training of deputy registrars and the proper completion of voter registration forms is also included.

All citations contained herein refer to the Illinois Election Code (10 ILCS 5/1-1, *et seq.* as amended) or as otherwise indicated. This guide may be amended to include new legislation and court decisions. Please visit the Illinois State Board of Elections website ([www.elections.il.gov](http://www.elections.il.gov)) for any updates. Additional information may be obtained by contacting your election authority (county clerk or board of election commissioners) or by calling the Illinois State Board of Elections in Springfield (217) 782-4141 or Chicago (312) 814-6440.

Legal information contained in this booklet is not binding and should not be construed as legal advice. This booklet is not intended to be used as a substitute for relevant statutes, the Illinois Constitution, or applicable case law. Whenever there is a question regarding the interpretation of information contained in this booklet, or of a particular section of the Election Code or any other statute, the individual should contact legal counsel.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Applying for Voter Registration Without a Deputy Registrar .....	1
Registration Application Form .....	1
Online Voter Registration .....	1
Grace Period Registration .....	1
Appointing Deputy Registrars .....	1
How to Become a Deputy Registrar .....	1
“Reasonable Number” of Appointments .....	2
Length of Appointment .....	3
Statewide Voter Registration .....	3
Civic Organizations .....	3
Labor Organizations .....	3
Organized Voter Registration Events .....	3
Temporary Places of Registration .....	4
Training of Deputy Registrars .....	4
Registration Record Cards .....	5
Oath Given Before Registration .....	5
Identification .....	5
Required Information for Registration Record Cards .....	6
Revocation of Appointment .....	7

# **APPLYING FOR VOTER REGISTRATION WITHOUT A DEPUTY REGISTRAR**

## **REGISTRATION APPLICATION FORM**

In Illinois, a one-part form is used as a voter registration application. This form is used in some State agencies and can also be used as a mail-in application for registration. The Illinois Voter Registration Application is available on the State Board of Elections' website at [www.elections.il.gov](http://www.elections.il.gov). (10 ILCS 5/1A-16(a)(3); 26 Ill. Adm. Code 216.20, 216.60, 216 EXH. A (2020))

Beginning in 2022, for the first time, a voter can request to be placed on a permanent vote by mail list. Such application must be made to the voter's election authority. A voter whose application for permanent vote by mail status is accepted by the election authority will remain on the list until the voter requests to be removed, provides notice to the election authority of a change in registration, or if the election authority receives confirmation that the voter has registered to vote in another county. (10 ILCS 5/19-2, 19-2.5, 19-3)

## **ONLINE VOTER REGISTRATION**

The State Board of Elections maintains a system for online voter registration on its website ([www.elections.il.gov](http://www.elections.il.gov)) that permits a person to apply to register to vote or to update their existing voter registration. This system verifies the applicant's information with the Secretary of State's database. If all information matches, the voter's signature is pulled from the Secretary of State's file and forwarded to the correct election authority along with the provided information. Online voter registration is available to anyone having a valid State of Illinois driver's license or State ID card. Online applications for voter registration filed on the State Board of Elections' website will be considered timely filed if submitted through the 16<sup>th</sup> day prior to an election. (10 ILCS 5/1A-16.5)

## **GRACE PERIOD REGISTRATION**

Grace period registration is an extension of the regular registration deadline. Grace period registration authorizes each election authority to establish procedures for the registration of voters and for change of address after the close of regular registration, during the period from the 27<sup>th</sup> day prior to an election through Election Day. Grace period registration is only available through the election authority, *not* through deputy registrars, and is only available in-person at sites designated by the election authority. (10 ILCS 5/4-50, 5-50, 6-100)

## **APPOINTING DEPUTY REGISTRARS**

A deputy registrar is a person appointed by an election authority for the limited and particular purpose of registering persons to vote in Illinois elections. The county clerk shall appoint all municipal and township or road district clerks, or their duly authorized deputies, as deputy registrars. The county clerk or board of election commissioners, as appropriate, shall appoint all precinct committeepersons in the election jurisdiction as qualified deputy registrars. (10 ILCS 5/4-6.2(a), 5-16.2(a), 6-50.2(a))

Deputy registrars may accept the registration of all qualified residents of the State, subject to limited exceptions detailed below. Registration by a deputy registrar is closed during the 27 day period before any election. All deputy registrars must be registered voters within the county. (10 ILCS 5/4-6.2(a), 5-16.2(a), 6-50.2(a); 26 Ill. Adm. Code 216.20 (2020))

**Exception:** All deputy registrars sworn in by a board of election commissioners must be registered voters within that city. (10 ILCS 5/6-24, 6-50.2)

## **HOW TO BECOME A DEPUTY REGISTRAR**

Upon written request, the following persons may apply to their election authority to become deputy

registrars. (10 ILCS 5/4-6.2(a), 5-16.2(a), 6-50.2(a);

- Chief librarian or their designee;
- Principal of a high school, elementary school, or vocational school, or their designee;
- President of a university, college, community college, academy, or other institution of learning, or their designee;
- Elected or appointed officials of bonafide labor organizations, or their designees;
- Elected or appointed officials of bonafide\* State civic organizations as certified by the State Board of Elections, or their designees;
- The Director of Healthcare and Family Services or their designated employees\*\*;
- Illinois Department of Employment Security Director or their designated employees\*\*;
- President of any corporation as defined by the Business Corporation Act of 1983 or their designated employees.

*\* For more information on the definition of a “bonafide State Civic Organization,” see §207.50 of the Illinois Administrative Code. (26 Ill. Adm. Code 207.50 (2020))*

*\*\*These two agencies may only accept the registration of a qualified resident of the county in which the particular office is located. All other registrars may accept the registration of all qualified residents of the entire State.*

Election authorities may require that any designee requesting to be appointed as a deputy registrar file a letter or signed statement of authorization from the designating officer of the organization. This letter should be kept on file in the election authority’s office.

#### **“REASONABLE NUMBER” OF APPOINTMENTS**

Each election authority must appoint all individuals who make a written request and who qualify, except labor organizations and civic organizations are limited to appointing a reasonable number of deputy registrars. (10 ILCS 5/4-6.2(a), 5-16.2(a), 6-50.2(a))

In no event may an election authority fix an arbitrary number applicable to every civic organization requesting appointment of its members as deputy registrars. (10 ILCS 5/4-6.2(a)(5), 5-16.2(a)(5), 6-50.2(a)(5)) The number of registrars from a State civic organization will vary across the State depending upon:

- Population and geographic size of the jurisdiction;
- Size of the organization;
- Convenience to the public;
- Existing number of deputy registrars in the jurisdiction and their locations;
- The need to appoint deputy registrars to assist with the registration of non-English speaking individuals; and
- Registration activities of the organization.

If any request to be appointed as a deputy registrar is denied, the election authority shall, within 10 days after the date the request is submitted, provide the affected individual or organization with written notice, setting forth the specific reasons or criteria relied upon to deny the request. (10 ILCS 5/4-6.2(a), 5-16.2(a), 6-50.2(7))

The election authority may appoint as many additional deputy registrars as are considered necessary

and shall appoint additional deputy registrars in such manner that the convenience of the public is served, giving due consideration to population concentration and area. Some of the additional deputy registrars shall be selected so that there are an equal number from each of the two major political parties in the election jurisdiction. The election authority, in appointing an additional deputy registrar, shall make the appointment from a list of applicants submitted by the chair of the county central committee of the applicant's political party. A chair of a county central committee shall submit a list of applicants to the county clerk by November 30 of each year. (10 ILCS 5/4-6.2(a), 5-16.2(a), 6-50.2(a))

### **LENGTH OF APPOINTMENT**

Appointments of deputy registrars, except precinct committee persons, shall be for 2-year terms commencing on December 1 following the general election of each even-numbered year, except the terms of initial appointments shall be until December 1 following the next general election. Appointments of precinct committee persons shall be for 2-year terms commencing on the date of the county convention following the general primary at which they were elected. (10 ILCS 5/4-6.2(a), 5-16.2(a), 6-50.2(a)) Organizations need to seek reappointment for their members if they want their members to continue serving as deputy registrars once the original appointment has expired. It is suggested that election authorities notify organizations of this need to re-apply.

### **STATEWIDE VOTER REGISTRATION**

Most appointed deputy registrars may accept the registration of any qualified resident of the State of Illinois. All deputy registrars may accept registrations at any time other than during the 27 day period before any election (the "grace period"). Deputy registrars must return any completed registration materials to their own appointing election authority. The appointing election authority shall then transmit the completed registration materials for persons residing outside their jurisdiction to the election authority of the person's jurisdiction of residence within two days. (10 ILCS 5/4-6.2, 5-16.2, 6-50.2)

### **CIVIC ORGANIZATIONS**

Civic organizations seeking to engage in voter registration activities must file an [application](#) with the State Board of Elections for certification as a bonafide State civic organization. Those organizations seeking certification must make application **no later than 90 days prior to the election** for which they wish to register voters. All organizations meeting the qualifications will be certified within 7 days from the date the application is received by the State Board of Elections. If an application is denied, the organization may appeal the decision at a public hearing. A certification letter is sent to the organization and a copy of the certification letter is sent to the appropriate election authority. Certified organizations seeking to have members appointed as deputy registrars must then submit a request in writing to the appropriate election authority, providing the name, address, and phone number of each person being appointed. A copy of the organization's certification should be attached to this letter. (10 ILCS 5/4-6.2(a)(5), 5-16.2(a)(5), 6-50.2(a)(5); 26 Ill. Adm. Code 207.50 (2020))

### **LABOR ORGANIZATIONS**

Labor organizations seeking to engage in voter registration activities must make application with the appropriate election authority and the request must be in writing. **Labor organizations do not need to be certified by the State Board of Elections.** Only bonafide labor organizations are authorized to participate in voter registration activities. (10 ILCS 5/4-6.2, 5-16.2, 6-50.2)

### **ORGANIZED VOTER REGISTRATION EVENTS**

It is recommended that organizations intending to conduct a major voter registration drive contact their election authority for guidance. Political parties having certified civic organization status must not conduct voter registration activities at political functions. Voter registration activities must be organized as separate and distinct functions by all organizations. **Any type of electioneering or campaigning**

**while conducting voter registration activities is strictly prohibited.** Note that voter registration cannot take place where any alcoholic beverages are being served. (10 ILCS 5/4-6.2(e), 4-7, 4-28, 5-16.2(e), 5-17, 5-39, 6-31, 6-50.2(e), 6-78)

Any person who knowingly gives, lends, or promises to give or lend any money, or other valuable consideration, to any other person to influence such other person to vote, to register to vote, or to influence such other person to vote for or against any candidate or public question to be voted upon at any election, shall be guilty of a Class 4 felony. (10 ILCS 5/29-1)

## **TEMPORARY PLACES OF REGISTRATION**

Election authorities may establish temporary places of registration. A notice of the times of operation and locations of temporary places of registration must be published not less than 3 nor more than 15 days before the holding of such registration. These temporary places of registration must be staffed by employees of the election authority or by deputy registrars. (10 ILCS 5/4-6.1(2), 4-6.3, 5-16.1(2), 5-16.3, 6-50.1(2), 6-50.3)

## **TRAINING OF DEPUTY REGISTRARS**

Illinois statutes provide the training of deputy registrars be under the direction of the election authority. (10 ILCS 5/4-6.2(b), 4-9, 5-8, 5-16.2(a)(b), 6-36, 6-50.2(b)) All training programs are designed to inform deputy registrars of their duties and responsibilities and include instructions relevant to the proper completion of the voter registration forms. Only the registration forms authorized by Illinois statute are to be used by deputy registrars. See page 5 for more detailed information about registration record forms. All information provided in any training program must be consistent with the Illinois Election Code and may include the following:

1. Instructions as to the duties and limitations of deputy registrars;
2. Instructions as to the proper completion of the registration forms;
3. The dates when registration is not allowed and when completed forms must be returned for processing. Completed registration forms must be returned to the election authority by first class mail within 2 business days or personal delivery within 7 days after receipt thereof, with some exceptions (10 ILCS 5/4-6.2(c), 5-16.2(c), 6-50.2(c));
  - a. Deputy registrars must return all registration materials (new registrations/evidence of previous registrations/changes in registration) to the election authority within 48 hours of registration if such registration was accepted between the 35<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> day preceding an election. Registrars must return all registration materials (new registrations/evidence of previous registrations/changes in registration) to the election authority within 24 hours of registration if such registration was accepted on the 28<sup>th</sup> day preceding an election.  
*Note:* For deputy registrars who were appointed as officials or designees of a bonafide labor organization, any unused registration materials must be returned to the election authority no later than the next working day following the close of registration. (10 ILCS 5/4-6.2(c), 4-8.03, 5-7.03, 6-35.03)
  - b. Registrars shall account for all registration forms issued to them. If a blank registration record card is mutilated or rendered unfit for use in making it out, or if a mistake is made, the word "mutilated" shall be written across the face of the card and the card shall be returned to the election authority along with all other unused forms. (10 ILCS 5/4-9, 5-8, 6-36)
4. An explanation of the office procedures for processing cards;
5. Procedures on changes of address and name changes (10 ILCS 5/4-8.03, 4-16, 5-7.03, 5-23, 6-35.03, 6-53, 6-54);
6. An explanation of local guidelines or rules adopted by the election authority which are consistent

with the Election Code;

7. General information regarding the statutory requirements for registering to vote in Illinois, which include that the registrant be:
  - a. a U.S. Citizen;
  - b. a resident in the precinct for at least 30 days prior to Election Day;
  - c. at least 18 years of age by the next Election Day or 17 years of age to register to vote in a general primary or consolidated primary if the individual will be 18 on the date of the immediately following general or consolidated election (10 ILCS 5/3-6); and
  - d. show two forms of identification. One of the identification forms must show the applicant's current residence address.  
(10 ILCS 5/4-10, 5-9, 6-37)

Upon completion of training, the election authority issues a certificate to each deputy registrar. The election authority also maintains a file of all appointed deputy registrars and must make a list of these appointments available for public inspection. (10 ILCS 5/4-6.2(a)-(b), 5-16.2(a)-(b), 6-50.2(a)-(b))

All deputy registrars are required to take and subscribe to the following oath or affirmation:

*"I do solemnly swear (or affirm, as the case may be) that I will support the Constitution of the United States, and the Constitution of the State of Illinois, and that I will faithfully discharge the duties of the office of deputy registrar to the best of my ability and that I will register no person nor cause the registration of any person except upon his personal application before me.*

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*"Deputy Registrar Signature"*

This oath is administered by the election authority or their deputy and is filed with the election authority. (10 ILCS 5/4-6.2(a), 5-16.2(a), 6-50.2(a))

## **REGISTRATION RECORD CARDS**

In determining the number of forms to be issued to a deputy registrar, consideration should be given to the registration plan or goal of the registrar or organization, and also to the size of the registrar's jurisdiction.

As part of the registration process the registrar must see two forms of identification, witness the signature of the applicant, and sign the application in the space provided. (10 ILCS 5/4-10, 5-9, 6-35, 6-37)

## **OATH GIVEN BEFORE REGISTRATION**

The deputy registrar shall make sure that each applicant for registration is qualified to register before registering the individual. The deputy registrar shall require each applicant to read or have read to them the following affidavit of registration before completing it:

*"You do solemnly swear (or affirm) that you will fully and truly answer all such questions as shall be put to you touching your name, place of residence, place of birth, your qualifications as an elector and your right as such to register and vote under the laws of the State of Illinois." (10 ILCS 5/4-10, 5-9, 6-37)*

## **IDENTIFICATION**

Voter registration applicants are required to show the deputy registrar or officer of registration two forms

of identification, and except in the case of a homeless individual, one of the pieces of identification must include the applicant's current residence address. These forms of identification shall include, but are not limited to, any of the following: driver's license, social security card, public aid identification card, utility bill, employee or student identification card, lease or contract for a residence, credit card, or a civic, union, or professional association membership card. A mailing address of a homeless individual may include, but is not limited to, a shelter, a day shelter, or a private residence. This use may be demonstrated by a piece of mail addressed to that individual and received at that mailing address. (10 ILCS 5/3-2, 4-10, 5-9, 6-35, 6-37)

## REQUIRED INFORMATION FOR REGISTRATION RECORD CARDS

- **Name**
- **Sex**
- **Residence:** The name and number of the street, avenue, or other location of the dwelling including the apartment, unit, or room number, if any, and in the case of a mobile home, the lot number, and such additional clear and definite description as may be necessary to determine the exact location of the dwelling of the applicant. Where the location cannot be determined by street and number, then the section, congressional township and range number may be used, or such other description as may be necessary, including post-office mailing address. In the case of a homeless individual, the individual's voting residence that is their mailing address shall be included on their registration record card.
- **Term of Residence:** In the State and precinct at least 30 days prior to the election.
- **Nativity:** The state or country of birth.
- **Citizenship:** Check whether the applicant is native born or naturalized. If naturalized: the court, place and date of naturalization.
- **Date of Application**
- **Age**
- **Social Security Number:** The last four digits of their Social Security Number, Driver's License Number or Secretary of State ID card number must be requested (otherwise they will be provided with a State Unique Identifier).
- **Telephone Number**
- **Physical Disability:** If any, at the time of registration, that would require assistance in voting.
- **County and State:** Where applicant was last registered.
- **Electronic Mail Address (optional)**
- **Signature of Voter:** In the presence of a deputy registrar, the registration applicant must sign their name in ink to the affidavit on both the original and duplicate registration record cards.
- **Affidavit of Registration:** The registration officer shall require each applicant to read or have read to them the following affidavit of registration before completing and signing the registration:

*"I hereby swear (or affirm) that I am a citizen of the United States; that on the date of the next election I shall have resided in the State of Illinois and in the election precinct in which I reside 30 days; that I am fully qualified to vote. That I intend that this location shall be my residence and that the above statements are true"*

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*"Applicant's Signature"*

In case the applicant is unable to sign their name, they may affix their mark to the affidavit. In such case the officer giving the registration oath shall write a detailed description of the applicant in the space provided on the back or at the bottom of the card or sheet, shall ask the

following questions and record the answers on the card:

- Father's first name.
- Mother's first name.
- From what address did the applicant last register?
- Reason for inability to sign name.

- **Signature of Deputy Registrar/Officer of Registration:** The individual acting in their official capacity as the deputy registrar or officer of registration must date and sign the application in the presence of the registrant.

(10 ILCS 5/4-8, 4-8.03, 4-10, 5-7, 5-9, 6-29, 6-35)

## **REVOCAION OF APPOINTMENT**

Election authorities are responsible for certifying and supervising all appointed deputy registrars. Deputy registrars are subject to removal for cause. (10 ILCS 5/4-6.2(b), 5-16.2(b), 6-50.2(b)) Grounds for dismissal could be, but are not limited to, the following actions or inactions:

- Failure to attend training session;
- No longer affiliated with sponsoring group;
- Suspension of registrar's own registration;
- Moved out of the jurisdiction;
- Knowingly furnished false information;
- Repeated failure to properly execute registration forms such as:
  - Failure to complete forms legibly and completely,
  - Failure, through negligence, to obtain correct information,
  - Failure to submit forms when they are due;
- Failure to register an individual based on a bias of the registrar;
- Failure to retain registration materials in the registrar's possession;
- Failure by the registrar to properly account for all registration forms;
- Failure to follow lawful instructions given by the election authority.

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*State of Illinois*



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