MDCR
MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF CIVIL RIGHTS

# Voting for Students and Young Adults in Michigan

## Your Civil Rights, Your Address, and Your Voting Options

# Voting is a Fundamental Civil Right

For students and young adults, changes in where you live or go to school, or voting for the first time, can make the process feel more complicated. If you attend college away from home, you have options. You may be able to register using your campus address or your permanent home address. Where you are registered determines where and what you vote on, so it is important to check your registration and make a voting plan before an election. **Michigan.gov/Vote** is the state's official source for personalized voting information, including your registration status, polling location, early voting information, mail-in ballot information, sample ballot, and local clerk.

# Students Have a Choice About Where to Register

College and university students attending school in Michigan can choose to register to vote using their permanent home address or campus address. This includes eligible out-of-state students attending a college or university in Michigan. Students can choose their permanent home address, but cannot be registered to vote and cast ballots at both addresses. Your choice determines the community where you vote and the local races and proposals that appear on your ballot.

# Living Away From Home? You Can Still Vote.

You do not have to travel home just to cast a ballot. If you are registered at your permanent Michigan home address, but are living somewhere else for school, you can request an mail-in ballot and have it mailed to you. Every registered Michigan voter has the right to vote using an mail-in ballot. You do not need a reason. If you prefer to vote where you attend school, you may instead choose to register using your campus address, if you are eligible. The important thing is to make a plan based on where you are registered before you vote.

# Check Where You Are Registered

Before every election, check your voter registration. This can be especially important for students and young adults who move frequently or have recently changed their address.

**Michigan.gov/Vote allows you to check:**

- Whether you are registered
- The address where you are registered
- Your Election Day polling place
- Your early voting information
- Your local clerk
- Your sample ballot
- Your mail-in ballot information

If you are registered using an old address, you may need to update your voter registration before voting.

# Changing Your Registration to Your Campus Address

If you are registered at your Michigan home address, but want to vote using your campus address, you can update your voter information. If you update your voter registration address, be aware that the change also updates the address associated with your Michigan driver's license or state ID. If you update your registration 15 or more days before Election Day, you have several options, including registering online, if eligible. Within 14 days of an election and through Election Day, you must register or update your registration in person at your local clerk's office and provide proof of residency.

# What Counts as Proof of Residency?

If you register or update your registration within 14 days of an election, you will need documentation showing your current name and address.

**For students, proof of residency can include:**

- A valid Michigan driver's license or state ID
- A page from your college or university student portal showing your name and campus address
- Financial aid documents
- University registration forms
- A bank or credit card statement
- A utility bill
- A lease or rental agreement

This can make it possible for students living in dorms or other campus housing to establish their residency even if they do not have a traditional utility bill or lease in their name.

# Voting with a Mail-in Ballot While Away at School

Mail-in ballots can be a useful option if you want to remain registered at your permanent Michigan address but are living somewhere else while attending school. Registered Michigan voters can request an mail-in ballot online, by mail, or in person. When requesting your ballot, make sure you provide the correct mailing address for where you are currently staying. Do not wait until Election Day is approaching to make your plan. Michigan election officials recommend requesting and returning mail-in ballots early enough to account for mailing time. Your completed mail-in ballot must be received by your local clerk by 8:00 p.m. on Election Day to be counted.

# Early Voting May Be Another Option

Michigan voters also have the right to vote early and in person in statewide and federal elections. Early voting can be helpful for students who have classes, work, transportation challenges, or other responsibilities that make voting on Election Day difficult. Make sure to check **Michigan.gov/Vote** to find your early voting information. Remember that your voting location is based on where you are registered, not simply where you happen to be living or attending classes.

# Know Your **Voting Rights**

Going away to college or living somewhere different from your permanent home does not mean you lose your ability and right to vote.

**Ombudsperson for Accessible Elections**
Phone: **517-335-2730**
Email: **MDOS-ADAVoting@michigan.gov**

**File a Complaint**
Voters can also contact the Michigan Department of Civil Rights if they believe they have been discriminated against during the voting process. To file a complaint:

Phone: **800-482-3604**
URL: **www.michigan.gov/mdcr/public-portal**