



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF N E W M E X I C O



Making democracy work!

VOTING AND ELECTION INFORMATION

In a democratic society, we have the privilege of voting to choose the representatives who will work on the problems important to us. Here is some information to help you navigate the world of voting in New Mexico.

Your Voice — Your Vote!

Elect Your Representatives

You'll want to 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. See if you can attend or watch a candidate forum, where candidates answer questions and talk about their qualifications and plans.

Vote on Services, Questions, Laws, and Money

Elections are also held for the purpose of voting on 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 or consult local newspapers or public libraries for information on voter guides and candidate forums.

COMMON VOTING TERMS

Absentee Ballot - A way to vote by mail instead of going to a polling place. In New Mexico, you do not need to supply a reason for obtaining an absentee ballot.

Ballot - The physical or electronic document on which the voter's choices are recorded.

Bond Elections - Taxes on property to pay for services. Local units of government, including school districts and public colleges, may hold bond or mill levy elections.

Constitutional Amendment - An addition or change to the state constitution, which requires a majority vote of the people.

Early Voting- Starts the third Saturday before an election. Voters can go to early voting locations.

General Elections -Every two years in even-numbered years, there are federal (national), state, and county elections. 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.

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.

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. For 28 days before General Election Days, citizens can vote in any early voting sites in their county. 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.

Primaries -A primary is an election where members of a party select their nominees for offices from among all of their party's candidates who are running. 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.

Referendum - A vote by citizens that repeals or rejects a state law that was enacted by the legislature.

Registration - The process of getting on the list of those eligible to vote. In New Mexico, you must register at least 28 days before an election. If you change your address, change which party you like best, or decide you do not want to tell whether you prefer one party or another, you should re-register to vote. Remember, you do not have to vote for the candidates within your party.

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.

ELECTIONS LEVELS

NATIONAL ELECTIONS

Federal Officials

President and Vice President

United States Senators and House Representatives

STATE ELECTIONS

State Officials

Governor

Lieutenant Governor

Secretary of State

Attorney General, Auditor, Treasurer, Commissioner of Public Lands Supreme Court and Court of Appeals Judges

DISTRICT ELECTIONS

Regional Officials

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 ELECTIONS

County Officials: Commissioners/Representatives, Clerk, Treasurer, Assessor, Sheriff

City Officials: Mayor, City Councilors, Municipal Judges

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REGISTERING TO VOTE

In order to vote, you must be a U.S. citizen, with a social security card, 18 years old or older on Election Day, and a resident of the state where you wish to vote. In New Mexico, registration is open up until 28 days before an election. You can register to vote through a voter registrar or by going to your County Clerk's office or other voter registration site, or you can download the National Voter Registration Application through the NM Secretary of State's website and mailing it in to your County Clerk. For this process and other information, go 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/>.

Note: An individual who has been convicted of a felony offense lose the right to vote until after s/he has completed the terms and conditions imposed by the court. After completing the felony sentence, the individual must re-register to vote.

VOTER ID

Each time you vote, you are required to say or write your name, address, and year of birth. If you are a first time voter who registered by mail and did not send in one of the following required documents with your registration, the first time you vote you need to show either your driver's license, student or tribal ID, bank statement, utility bill, or paycheck.

ABSENTEE BALLOTS

An absentee ballot is a way to vote if you are unable to get to your polling place on Election Day. You must request an absentee ballot application from your County Clerk or City Clerk (if Municipal Election) no later than 5 p.m. on the Friday prior to the election and make sure to submit it on time. You do not need to supply a reason.

Some of the reasons why a citizen may want to request an absentee ballot:

- *Elderly or disabled and unable to make the trip to a Voting Center or polling place
- *Will be out of town during election
- *Unable to go to polls due to religion, work, or other reason
- *Plan to work as a poll worker in another precinct rather than in home precinct

For more information about voting and to download a voter registration form or absentee ballot application, visit http://www.sos.state.nm.us/Voter_Information/

VOTER ROLLS

According to the National Voter Registration Act, there is no requirement for a voter to vote in order for that voter to stay on the list (roll) of those eligible to vote. Registered voters stay active on the roll as long as they do not move: they are registered for life, even if they never appear at the polls. The voter may be purged (taken off) the rolls if a mailing from the Secretary of State to a voter comes back undeliverable.

Unleash Your Power. VOTE!!!

Don't waste your opportunity to let your voice be heard. 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.

The League of Women Voters of New Mexico is an inclusive, independent, and nonpartisan organization for men and women who are committed to civic improvement. 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