



CITY OF BOSTON
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College Students and Absentee Voting

The Boston Election Department congratulates you on the completion of your high school studies, and the start of your college career. Even if you are going away to school, it is important for you to participate in the civic life of the City through voting. Here are some facts about absentee voting, specifically as it applies to students.



LIVING ON CAMPUS IN BOSTON

I am registered to vote in Boston at my home address, but I live in the dorms on campus in another part of the City. Where do I vote?

This is very confusing for many students. If you are registered *anywhere* in the City, you must go to the polling location assigned to your voting address to cast your ballot. You are *not* eligible for an absentee ballot. If you wish to vote closer to your college campus, you must change your voter registration to your dormitory address. There are 254 polling locations in the City. If you wish to change your voting address to vote on-campus, download a form from www.cityofboston.gov/elections, and mail it to the Boston Election Department. Make sure your address change is received no later than 20 days before the next election (all dates and deadlines are also on the website under “Election Calendar”).

➤ Example

Mary is registered to vote at her parents’ home in West Roxbury. However, she is living in the freshman dorms at BU. Mary has two choices: she can either travel to West Roxbury at some point during the Election Day (polls are open between 7AM and 8PM), or she can change her voter registration to her campus address, in which case, she will be assigned to a polling location closer to school.

Why can’t I just go to the nearest polling location? What’s the big deal?

There are 22 Wards and 254 Precincts in Boston. Every address in the City is assigned to a Ward and a Precinct, as well as a City Council District. Congressmen, State Senators and Representatives, and District City Councillors represent voters in different wards and precincts. The ballot you receive at your home address will most likely be different from the ballot you would receive if you choose to vote from a campus address. New voters and students should keep this in mind, especially if they feel strongly about the local candidates in their home areas.



ATTENDING COLLEGE OUTSIDE BOSTON

I am attending college, and living, in another city/town in Massachusetts, but I want to vote from my home address in Boston? What do I do?

You would request an absentee ballot from the Boston Election Department. See the general absentee ballot guidelines for more information. If you do not apply for your absentee ballot in time, or return it in a timely manner, you will be required to return to your home address to cast your vote at your assigned precinct. Absentee Ballot applications are available online at www.cityofboston.gov/elections.



ATTENDING COLLEGE OUT OF STATE

Follow the general guidelines for absentee ballots. If you are mailing your ballot, allow plenty of time for it to reach the Boston Election Department. **Postage for absentee ballots is about 61 cents.** At the time of this writing, special absentee ballot postage rates are being discussed and will hopefully be available soon.



MISCELLANEOUS

Most of you will not be able to fill out your absentee ballot requests until you get your room assignments and campus mailing address. As soon as you do so, submit your request for an absentee ballot, or ask your family member to do so, using the appropriate form from the website: www.cityofboston.gov/elections.

You must fill out a new absentee ballot request every calendar year. Many of you will have changes in room assignments, but hopefully, your campus mailbox will stay the same. Make sure to update any information that will allow us to get your ballot to you easily.

Make sure to check your campus mailbox regularly, and let the Boston Election Department know quickly if you did not receive your ballot.

Absentee ballots must be delivered by mail. Your family members *may not* come to City Hall to pick up a ballot for you, nor can they complete your ballot unless special circumstances are involved. If you think you fall into that category, please contact the Boston Election Department by phone or email.

If you are studying abroad, or serving in the military, please check the guidelines for **Specially Qualified Voters (SQV)**.

If you are a first-time voter who registered by mail, you may have to attach a copy of your identification from your home address when you mail back your absentee ballot. This will be specified on your Registration Confirmation notice. See general guidelines for acceptable forms of ID; a driver's license with your voting address is always the preferred form of ID. **Any piece of identification must show your voting address** (passports do not have addresses)!