

Mississippi Voter Advocate Guide

1. To find whether you're registered to vote

Call your local Circuit Clerk and ask. You can find your local Circuit Clerk at www.sos.ms.gov/page.aspx?s=7&s1=1&s2=7

2. How to register to vote

You must register to vote at least 30 days before the next election. If you register to vote **by mail**, your application must be postmarked at least 30 days prior to the next election. If you missed the deadline, register anyway so you can vote in the Next election.

To Register:

- Download and fill in a registration form from:
http://www.sos.ms.gov/PTV_curriculum/VoterRegAdobe.pdf and mail it to your County's [Circuit Clerk](#)
- Note that this form requires ONE of the following (in order of preference)
 - Mississippi Driver's License Number
 - The last 4 digits of your Social Security Number
 - A copy of current and valid photo identification
 - A copy of a current utility bill, bank statement, government check, paycheck, or other government document that shows your name and address.

OR

- Go in person (or mail or phone) to your County's
 - [Circuit Clerk](#)
 - Motor Vehicle Office (National Voter Registration Act ("NVRA") site)
 - Public assistance or disability office (NVRA sites)

OR

- Register for an absentee Ballot, if you are eligible

Eligibility to use an absentee ballot to vote by mail

Not everyone is allowed to use an absentee ballot. Those who are

allowed to use an absentee ballot are:

- Anyone who will be away from his/her county of residence on election day for any reason
- Anyone with a physical disability
- Anyone who is sixty-five (65) years of age or older
- Anyone attending a disabled family member who is hospitalized more than fifty (50) miles from his residence
- Anyone required to be at work during the times the polls will be open.

The voter must, in general, apply for an absentee ballot **In Person** at the Circuit Clerk's office, from 45 days before the election to noon on the Saturday preceding the election. S/he must either have Photo ID, or documents sufficient to apply for a Voter ID at that time. Those allowed to apply for an absentee ballot **by Mailing** the absentee ballot registration form to the Circuit Clerk, are:

- Anyone temporarily residing outside the county (the signature on the application must be notarized)
- Anyone with a physical disability (the application must be witnessed by an adult)
- Anyone who is sixty-five (65) years of age or older
- Anyone attending a disabled family member who is hospitalized more than fifty (50) miles from his residence

If you don't have a driver's license or social security number to enter on the application, and you have never before registered to vote in the county, you must send with the application either a) a copy of current and valid photo identification; or b) a copy of a current utility bill, bank statement, government check, paycheck, or other government document that shows your name and address.

3. Photographic Identification

To vote at the polls or to file an absentee ballot with the Circuit Clerk, you will need an Acceptable Photographic Identification with the same name and address as your voter registration. "Acceptable Photographic Identification" means the following:

- A driver's license
- A photo ID card issued by a branch, department, or entity of the

State of Mississippi

- A United States passport
- A government employee ID card
- A firearms license
- A student photo ID issued by an accredited Mississippi university, college, or community/junior college
- A United States military ID
- A tribal photo ID
- Any other photo ID issued by any branch, department, agency or entity of the United States government or any State government
- A Mississippi Voter Identification Card

4. Expired ID:

An otherwise valid Photo ID will be acceptable if it has no expiration date or has an issuance date not more than ten (10) years ago, **even if it is past its expiration date.**

5. Name on Photo ID not identical to name on voter registration

Even if the voter's name as it appears on the Acceptable Photographic Identification is not identical to the name as it appears in the poll book, **the voter will be allowed to vote a regular ballot as long as the names are "substantially similar".**

A voter's name on the Acceptable Photographic Identification is "substantially similar" to the name on the poll book if one or more of the following circumstances is present:

- The names are slightly different
- One of the names is a customary variation or abbreviation of the formal name
 - Such as "Bill" or "Wm." for "William", or "Pam" for "Pamela"
- One of the names is missing an initial or a middle name that the other includes
 - Such as "James W. Smith" or "James Wilson Smith"
- A first name, middle name, former name, maiden name or initial appears in a different order
 - Such as "Alice Elizabeth Roberts" for "Elizabeth Alice Roberts"

If the voter's middle or last name is different due to marriage, divorce, or hyphenation:

- A part of the name, the address or the date of birth (if provided) must match, and
- The photograph on the Acceptable Photographic Identification must “fairly depict” the voter

6. Address on Photo ID is not identical to that on the voter registration

You must either:

- Present a Photo ID that does match
- Go to the [Circuit Clerk](#) in your current county to change the address on your registration
- Go to the [Circuit Clerk](#) to re-register if you've moved to a new county

7. If you have no valid current Photo Identification

You need a Photo ID only if you're voting at the polls or turning in an absentee ballot at the Circuit Clerk's office. You don't need a photo ID **if** you're mailing in an absentee ballot or if you file an affidavit that you have a religious objection to being photographed. **If (and Only if) you have no acceptable Photo ID**, your [Circuit Clerk](#) will issue one for free, and pay for transportation to get you to the office and back home. Call 855-868-3745 to request transportation assistance.

There you will be asked to present any **ONE** of the following forms of documentation:

- A valid but Expired Photo ID, issued by any state or federal agency
- Any document showing your full legal name, date and place of birth, including, **but not limited to**, a birth certificate
- A Social Security card
- A Medicare card
- A Medicaid card
- Any of the following documents, provided the document sets forth your name and principal residential address:
 - Utility bill issued within the past six (6) months
 - Bank statement issued within the past six (6) months
 - Paycheck issued within the past six (6) months
 - Government check issued within the past six (6) months
 - Any other government document that shows your name and principal residential address issued within the current

calendar year, such as an IRS Form W-2, Wage and Tax Statement

- Mississippi Voter Registration Card

If you do not have any of these documents, the Clerk may verify your birth information free of charge if you provide your date of birth, your gender, the county and state where you were born, and your mother's maiden name.

If you are unable to read or write by reason of disability or otherwise, the Clerk will read the application and oath to you and fill it in. If you can't sign your name, you can make your mark and the Clerk will write your name.

For further assistance, you can contact:

- The Mississippi Secretary of State website:
<http://www.msvoterid.ms.gov/Pages/VoterIDHowtoGetID.htm>
- Elections Answerline at 1-800-829-6786
- VoteRiders.org at <http://voteriders.org/contact>