

VOTING RIGHTS

The Importance of Voting

Voting is one of the most important activities that an ex-offender can engage in to fully reenter the community. While incarcerated, people are not only removed physically from their family and community, but their voices are silenced in the decision-making process that is our democracy.

In Maryland, many ex-offenders, along with supporting organizations and individuals, lobbied hard to have voter rights restored to felons. In February, 2016, the Democratic-controlled General Assembly was able to narrowly override the veto of Governor Larry Hogan in order to expand those voting rights. Through those efforts, voting rights have been restored to felons on probation or parole, giving approximately 40,000 felons the right to vote.

Make sure your voice is heard! Register to vote!

Here are the rules:

Who may register to vote in Maryland?

You may register to vote in Maryland if ALL of the following facts are true:

1. You are a US citizen*; and
2. You are a Maryland resident; and
3. You are not disqualified from voting; and
4. You are at least 16 years old. (You can register at age 16, but you generally cannot vote until age 18. The one time you can vote while under age 18 is in a primary election that leads to a general or special election that will take place when you are at least age 18.)

<https://www.peoples-law.org/voting-rights>

Disqualification from voting includes:

1. You are currently incarcerated for a felony conviction
2. You are under guardianship for mental disability AND the appropriate court has found by clear and convincing evidence that you cannot communicate, with or without accommodations, a desire to participate in the voting process; or

3. You have been convicted of buying or selling votes.

*Note: Some municipalities in Maryland (such as Barnesville and Tacoma Park) allow non-citizens to vote in local elections.

See Baltimore Sun article:

<http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/maryland/politics/blog/bs-md-immigrant-voting-20170805-story.html>

As of March 10, 2016 voting rights of people with a felony conviction are automatically restored after they have served their sentence, **even if they are on parole or probation**

If a person has a conviction but receives NO time in prison (that is, has probation only), that person's voting rights are NOT suspended at all.

Brennan Center

<https://www.brennancenter.org/analysis/voting-rights-restoration-efforts-maryland>

Baltimore Sun article:

<http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/maryland/politics/bs-md-felons-voting-20160209-story.html>

HOW TO REGISTER TO VOTE

If you have never been registered to vote, you may do so on-line or by filling out and submitting the voter registration application to the Board of Elections.

Voter Registration Application: Use this form:

1. To register to vote in Maryland or
2. To change your party affiliation or
3. To change your name or
4. To change your address

In order to register to vote, you must have a valid driver's license or a current MVA ID card. If you don't have either, you will need to provide the last four digits of your Social Security number.

You can access the voter registration application on-line at:

http://elections.state.md.us/voter_registration/documents/English_Internet_VRA.pdf

This on-line form can be printed and mailed to the State or your local county's board of elections.

Or, you can register on-line at:

<https://voterservices.elections.maryland.gov/OnlineVoterRegistration>

Or, you can complete an application at any of these locations:

- 1 State or county Board of Elections office
- 2 Department of Health and Mental Hygiene
- 3 Department of Social Services
- 4 The Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA)
- 5 Offices on Aging
- 6 The MTA Paratransit Certification Office
- 7 Any public institution of higher education
- 8 Any recruitment office of the U.S. Armed Forces
- 9 Any marriage license office
- 10 Offices for students with disabilities at all Maryland colleges and universities
- 11

You can also register to vote during the early voting period.

For complete instructions: http://elections.state.md.us/voter_registration/index.html