

# CATAWBA COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS

## Voter Registration – Frequently Asked Questions

### Who is qualified to vote in North Carolina?

To register to vote in North Carolina, a person must meet the following qualifications:

- Must be a U.S. citizen.
- Must be a resident of the county, and prior to voting in an election, must have resided at his or her residential address for at least 30 days prior to the date of the election.
- Must be at least 18 years old or will be 18 by the date of the next general election. 16- and 17-year-olds may pre-register by submitting a completed registration form. (Note: A 17-year-old may vote in a Primary if they will be 18 on or before the General election.)
- Must not be serving a sentence for a felony conviction (including probation or on parole). If previously convicted of a felony, the person's citizenship rights must be restored. Citizenship and voting rights are automatically restored upon completion of the sentence. No special document is required to be shown; however, you must re-register after your voting rights have been restored.
- Must rescind any previous registration in another county or state.

### Is there a deadline to register to vote on election day or to change my party?

The Registration Books close 25 days before an election. If the registration form is not received (or postmarked) by the deadline, you may not vote on election day. No party changes can be made after books close.

However, you may still register and vote at One-Stop Early Voting.

If you fail to register by 25 days before the election (when the books close), you may still register and vote at a One-Stop early voting location. As a new registrant, you will be required to show proof of residency when you register and vote at a one-stop.

Note: if you are previously registered in the county, you may NOT change your party affiliation after books close.

### May I sign a Voter Registration for someone else?

No, only the voter may sign his or her voter registration application. You are not permitted to sign the form for your spouse, child, or parent—not even if you have power of attorney for the person.

Voter signatures are clipped and become part of the voter's permanent record. If the voter cannot sign their name, the law does allow the voter to "make a mark" as an acceptable signature.

### If I select "Unaffiliated" for my party affiliation, may I still vote in a Partisan Primary?

Yes. North Carolina currently recognizes the following political parties: Democratic, Republican, Libertarian, Green and Constitution. If you are registered as "Unaffiliated" you may choose a Democratic, Republican, or Libertarian ballot to vote during a partisan primary. Currently, Green and Constitution parties do not allow unaffiliated voters to vote in their primaries. Your party affiliation has no bearing on General or Municipal elections, only during Partisan Primaries (and their runoffs) does it come into play.

Note: If there is a Primary runoff, you may only vote the same party's ballot you chose in the first election. If you did not vote in the first primary, you may choose from the available parties during the runoff.

### What address do I use on my registration?

Your legal voting residence is your place of permanent domicile.

*That place shall be considered the residence of a person in which that person's habitation is fixed, and to which, whenever that person is absent, that person has the intention of returning. - NCGS § 163-57(1)*

You cannot use your work address (unless you live there).

### I'm a college student living away from home. Where do I register?

College students may register and vote in the county where they are attending college (in most situations, the college student could also opt to register or remain registered at the address where they lived previous to moving away for college, and could choose to vote absentee). If a student registers at his or her school address, that registration cancels any previous registration in another county.

*So long as a student intends to make the student's home in the community where the student is physically present for the purpose of attending school while the student is attending school and has no intent to return to the student's former home after graduation, the student may claim the college community as the student's domicile. The student need not also intend to stay in the college community beyond graduation in order to establish domicile there. - NCGS § 163-57(12)*

### Can a homeless person register to vote?

Citizens who are homeless may register and vote.

*In the event that a person's residence is not a traditional residence associated with real property, then the location of the usual sleeping area for that person shall be controlling as to the residency of that person. Residence shall be broadly construed to provide all persons with the opportunity to register and to vote, including stating a mailing address different from residence address. - NCGS § 163-57(1)(c)*

Voter registration forms provide a space for an applicant to visually map where they usually sleep.

### We are rebuilding our house after a fire and are now living with family. Do we need to change our registration?

You may continue to vote in your usual North Carolina county if you only temporarily relocate.

*A person shall not be considered to have lost that person's residence if that person leaves home and goes into another state, county, municipality, precinct, ward, or other election district of North Carolina, for temporary purposes only, with the intention of returning. - NCGS § 163-57(2)*

### Can a person register if they are under 18 years old?

16 and 17 year-olds may pre-register to vote. They will automatically become full registered voters as soon as they turn 18. The same NC voter registration form is used for pre-registration.

17 year-olds will be eligible to vote during Primary elections if they will turn 18 on or before the General election. If pre-registered, they will become active voters before the Primary election.

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**catawba county**  
board of elections

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