

City of Lynn Elections Office

Frequently Asked Questions

September 2021

We are featuring questions and answers to help inform voters of the election process.

If you have a question you would like us to answer, or if you would like more information on a specific topic, we are happy to help.

Please call our office at 781-586-6805 and/or email me at jrowe@lynnma.gov

Janet Rowe

City Clerk/Chief of Elections

-HOW CAN I REGISTER TO VOTE?

-HOW DO I KNOW IF I AM REGISTERED TO VOTE?

-WHEN IS THE LAST DAY TO REGISTER TO VOTE FOR THE NOVEMBER 2, 2021 ELECTION?

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HOW CAN I REGISTER TO VOTE?

Voter registrations can be found on line at our website or in our office in City Hall, room 203. If you register on line, you can email the application back to us (please make sure your signature is clear). We will mail you a confirmation with your polling location information. You can also register at the RMV and on the State Election website <https://www.sec.state.ma.us/>

HOW DO I KNOW IF I AM REGISTERED TO VOTE?

You can call our office at 781-586-6805, email us at krichard@lynnma.gov, visit our city website www.lynnma.gov and go to Chief of Elections drop down menu to register vote or you can visit the Secretary of State website at <https://www.sec.state.ma.us/> and enter your info to see if you are registered, where you vote and it will list your political party. It will also show your voting status (active or inactive).

WHEN IS THE LAST DAY TO REGISTER TO VOTE FOR THE NOV. 2, 2021 ELECTION?

The last day and hour to register to vote for the November 2, 2021 Election is October 13, 2021 at 8:00 pm in the Election office room 203, Lynn City Hall. Please see our website to download and application or go to the Secretary of State Website and register on line (if you have a Massachusetts driving license) <https://www.sec.state.ma.us/>

WHAT ARE MY VOTING OPTIONS?

1. **Polling locations:** All registered voters in the City of Lynn can vote on voting day from 7:00 AM to 8:00 PM at their specific polling location. A list of polling locations is available on this website under “where do I vote”.
2. **Vote by Mail:** Chapter 29, Acts 2021-The State of Massachusetts has approved “vote by mail ballots” in 2021 (no reason required). You may request a vote by mail ballot by filling out the application (on this website) and send it to the Election office by mail, email or in person. This application must have a “real signature” (no font signature). The last day to request that a “mail in ballot” be sent to you is 4 business days before the election (the Wednesday before the election if on a Tuesday). As soon as the ballots are available, we will mail them out. Whether you choose to mail it back, drop it in our Vote Box outside City Hall or deliver in hand, all ballots must be received in this office by **8:00 PM** on

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Election Day. Any ballots received after this deadline will not be accepted. Even if they are postmarked prior to the deadline, they do not count. The ballot must be physically here in our office by 8pm on voting day.

3. **Vote by Absentee Ballot by Mail:** Chapter 29, Acts 2021- Voters may request that an “absentee ballot” be mailed to them if they are not able to get to the polls on Election Day for qualifying reasons, (*per the State, fear of Covid is considered a physical disability*). You may request an absentee ballot be mailed to you by filling out the application (on our website) send it to the Election office by mail, email or in person. This application must have a “real signature” (no font signature).The last day to request an absentee ballot to be sent to you by mail is four (4) business days before the election (the Wednesday before the election if on a Tuesday). As soon as the ballots are available, we will mail them out. Whether you choose to mail it back, drop it in our vote box outside City Hall or deliver in hand, all ballots must be received in this office by 8:00 PM on Election Day. Any ballots received after this deadline will not be accepted. Even if they are postmarked prior to the deadline, they do not count. The ballot must be physically here in our office by 8pm on voting day.
4. **Vote by Absentee Ballot in Person:** Voters may come into the Election office, if they are not able to get to the polls on Election Day for qualifying reasons, Per the State “ if a voter wants to vote absentee in person, if they qualify (*fear of Covid is considered a physical disability*), this must be arranged at the convenience of the local election official and they don’t have to allow walk in voting”. The deadline for this option is the day before the election at 12:00 PM.
5. **Early In Person Voting:** For the Presidential and State Elections, early voting was offered in the foyer of City Hall. Voters came in during hours specified by the Election Office. Weekend hours were available during the Presidential Election. This option was mandated by the State and we were reimbursed by the State for election poll workers and police details. The State does not mandate local municipal elections so the cost of this option would have to be encumbered by the City. The “early in person voting” at City Hall would also have to be approved by the City Council Public Property Committee and again by the City Council to use this location as a polling place. This option was very costly particularly since we had to hire additional workers during the Pandemic in order to comply with regulations by the Public Health Director.

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WHY WOULD I NEED AN ID AT THE POLLS?

An ID is required from:

1. **“Inactive Voter”**: When a voter does not answer the annual street listing (mailed each year), and/or their letter is returned to us as undeliverable from the Post Office, the Election Department deems that voter “inactive” since we are not sure if the voter has moved or is deceased. The inactive status is there to protect the voter. When the voter comes to vote, the poll worker will call the election office to verify that they are inactive at that address. The voter will be asked to fill out an “Affirmation of Continuous Residence” in Lynn. They will then have to show an ID (either license, bank statement, utility bill, lease, anything with their name and address on it). This procedure is done to protect the voter to ensure no one else is trying to vote in their name. If they live at a new address in Lynn, that new address will be changed after the election and a confirmation will be sent to the voter informing them of their new polling location.
2. **“Voting for first time”**: If we receive your voter registration by mail, we will send you a confirmation letting you know your polling location. The confirmation may indicate you are required to show an ID at the polls. (either license, bank statement, utility bill, lease, anything with their name and address on it). This is a one-time requirement. You may also call us at 781-586-6805 if you have any question on voting for the first time.

HOW DO I RETURN MY “MAIL IN” OR “ABSENTEE BALLOT”?

Please follow the instructions in your ballot packet. Make sure you print your name and address (unless a label is attached with that information) and make sure your **SIGNATURE** is on the ballot envelope. **We cannot accept ballots if they are not signed.** You can then mail the ballot through the U.S. Postal Service (please make sure postage is sufficient and allow 7 days for mailing), drop it in our 24 hour Vote Mail Box located at the City Hall rear door on Johnson Street side, or hand deliver it to our office. All ballots received by 8pm on voting day will be accepted. Any ballots received after the deadline will be time stamped upon receipt and they will not be counted. The State Election office encourages voters to mail their ballot back early, as it can take up to seven days for mail delivery. “The postmark is not relevant; what’s relevant is when the ballots arrive”, which must be by **8pm** on Election Day. We recommend you use our 24 hour Vote Mail Box located outside City Hall as we retrieve ballots at least 3 times per day. You can also hand deliver it to our office during regular business hours. This box is emptied and locked at 8pm on Election Day.

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HOW DO I KNOW IF MY BALLOT WAS RECEIVED BY THE ELECTION OFFICE?

To track your ballot on line:

<https://www.sec.state.ma.us/wheredoivotema/track/trackmyballot.aspx>

This page will tell you the date we mailed your ballot to you, the day we received it back and the status (pending or accepted). You can also call our office 781-586-6805 (in case the website has not been updated) and we will let you know if we received the ballot. It is always a good idea to check on your ballot as they can get lost or delayed in the mail. We are happy to help you over the phone, so please call to verify.

WHAT IS AN AUXILIARY BALLOT?

Auxiliary Ballot: A Ballot that was rejected by the machine for any number of reasons: A pencil was used or the circle was not completely colored in, check marked, dash, or line used to mark ballot incorrectly, ballot torn or mutilated in any way. These ballots must be counted by hand by Election Department.

WHAT IS A PROVISIONAL BALLOT?

Provisional Ballot: A voter can vote “provisionally, when they come to the polls to vote and they are not listed at the address, they are marked off as already voted by another method, e.g. early voting, mail in voting, absentee voting or for any other reason. These ballots must be validated by the Election office before they are counted.