



SOUTH DAKOTA SECRETARY OF STATE – DIVISION OF ELECTIONS

2025-2026 MUNICIPAL AND SCHOOL ELECTION WORKSHOP WEBINAR 3

Sponsored By:
Secretary of State's Office
South Dakota Municipal League
Associated School Boards of South Dakota



SOUTH DAKOTA
MUNICIPAL LEAGUE





SOUTH DAKOTA SECRETARY OF STATE – DIVISION OF ELECTIONS

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SOUTH DAKOTA SECRETARY OF STATE – DIVISION OF ELECTIONS

VOTER QUALIFICATIONS



SOUTH DAKOTA SECRETARY OF STATE – DIVISION OF ELECTIONS

VOTER QUALIFICATIONS FOR MUNICIPAL AND SCHOOL DISTRICT ELECTIONS

Voter qualifications for municipal and school district elections are established in SDCL [9-13-4.1](#) and [13-7-4.2](#).

In order for an individual to vote in either a municipal or school district election, the individual must:

- 1) Be registered to vote pursuant to SDCL chapter [12-4](#); and
- 2) Be a resident of the municipality or school district at the time of the election.

An individual is considered a resident of a municipality or school district if they meet any of the following criteria:

- 1) The individual “actually lives” in the municipality or school district for at least thirty days each year;
- 2) The individual is a full-time postsecondary education student who resided in the municipality or school district immediately prior to leaving for the postsecondary education; or
- 3) The individual is on active duty as a member of the Armed Forces whose home of record is within the municipality or school district.

Under most circumstances, it is not your job or your election workers’ job to judge the qualifications of individual voters, provided that they are registered to vote and appear on your official voter registration list. If there are any concerns about an individual’s qualifications, the individual’s right to vote may be challenged by a poll watcher or another interested party. ***There will be more on these challenges in the next webinar!***



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VOTER REGISTRATION DUTIES

Pursuant to SDCL [12-4-2](#), municipal finance officers **must** conduct voter registration (i.e., the finance office is an official voter registration site). School district business managers **are not** responsible for voter registration.

Voter Registration Process – Municipal Finance Officers:

1. If an individual comes to register to vote, you must provide them with a voter registration form and help them complete it if they need any help doing so.
 - a. It is your duty to ensure that the form is completed correctly before it is handed over (SDCL [12-4-7.2](#)).
2. When you receive a voter registration form, you should date stamp it immediately.
3. After receiving and stamping the form, you should deliver (by mail or in person) it to the county auditor's office as soon as possible.
 - a. A voter registration form completed at a city finance office during any given week commencing on Tuesday through the following Monday must be sent to the appropriate county auditor no later than the following Wednesday (SDCL [12-4-5](#)).
 - b. The voter's registration will be considered effective on the date that the form is received by the municipal finance officer, meaning that there is some flexibility around the deadline day (SDCL [12-4-6.1](#)).



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VOTER REGISTRATION DUTIES (CONT'D)

Voter Registration Process – School District Business Managers:

1. If an individual comes to register to vote, we recommend directing them to the county auditor's office or a city finance officer's office; however, you may still choose to provide them with a voter registration form.
2. If you receive a voter registration form, you should date stamp it immediately.
3. After receiving and stamping the form, you should deliver it to the county auditor's office as soon as possible.
 - a. Since school district business managers do not have any official role in the voter registration process, you must deliver the form to the county auditor's office within ten days or by the voter registration deadline, whichever occurs first (SDCL [12-4-3.2](#)). ***Failure to do so would be a Class 2 misdemeanor.***
 - b. The voter's registration will be considered effective on the date that the form is received by the county auditor, meaning that there is absolutely no flexibility around the deadline day (SDCL [12-4-6.1](#)).

Just for reference, other official voter registration sites include: a driver's license station, a public assistance agency, a Department of Human Services office, military recruitment offices; and the Secretary of State's office.

Let's take a quick look at the voter registration form!





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South Dakota Voter Registration Form County _____

Use this form to register to vote or
update your name, address, or party
affiliation.

Eligibility

Required

1

Are you a citizen of the United States? ☐ Yes ☐ No
I will be 18 years or older by the next election. ☐ Yes ☐ No

If you answer "No", in response to either of
these questions do not complete this form.

Birthdate

Required

2

Birthdate (Not today's date)

Month Day Year

Name

Required

3

Last Name First Name Middle Name Suffix

Identification

Required

4

SD Driver's License (DL) # or SD Non-Driver ID # OR Last 4 digits of your SSN
X X X - X X -

If you do not have a current SD DL # or SD Non-Driver ID #, provide the last 4 digits of Social Security Number.

Residence Address

Required

Write your address or
describe or draw where
you live.

If you use a commercial
mail receiving agency,
mail forwarding service,
or other post office box as
your residence address
without a description of the
location of your
habitation, you may be
registered only as a
federal voter.

5

Residence Address Apt # or Lot #
City or Town State Zip Code

OR

If you live in a rural area and do not have a street address; if your
residence address is a PO Box, rural box, or general delivery; or
if you have no address, please describe the physical location of
your residence in writing in the space provided which may include
writing the names of the streets or intersections nearest to where
you live and listing any landmarks (e.g., schools, churches, stores)
near where you live. If you run out of room or if you want to draw a
map to pinpoint your residence and you do not have enough room
in the space provided, use the back of this form.

Mailing Address

If different from your
address in section 5.

6

Mailing Address Apt # or Lot #
City or Town State Zip Code

Party Affiliation

7

- If you're currently registered in South Dakota and
you don't choose a party on this form, you'll keep
your current party affiliation.
- If you are not currently registered in South Dakota
and you don't choose a party on this form, you'll
be registered with no party affiliation.

Write in Your Party Affiliation

See the SD Voter Registration Instructions for recognized
party information.

Declaration

Required

If you can't sign your
name, you may make a
mark instead. Someone
else must write your name
near the mark and sign as
a witness.

8

I declare, under penalty of perjury (2 years imprisonment and \$4,000 fine), that:

- I am a citizen of the United States of America;
- I will be 18 years of age at the time of the next
election;
- I am a resident of South Dakota (residency laws are on
the back of this form);
- I have not been judged mentally incompetent;
- I am not currently serving a sentence for a felony
conviction;
- I authorize cancellation of my previous registration, if
applicable; and
- I have complied with all voter registration
requirements in SDCL chapter 12-4.

Voter, sign here (power of attorney not allowed)

X Today's Date
Month Day Year

Read instructions and enter additional information on the back of the form.

ARSD 5:02:03:01 - January 1, 2026

Sign Up to Be an Election Worker

9

☐ I would like to be an election worker on election day.

Contact Information

(Optional)

10

Email Address Phone Number

Previous Information

Use this section to cancel
your previous voter
registration information.
Please complete this section
if you have moved to South
Dakota from a different
state, moved within South
Dakota, or changed your
last name.

11

Last Name First Name Middle Name Suffix
Address Apt # or Lot #
City or Town State Zip Code
Previous Drivers License Number and State Previous County

Need more space to describe where you live or draw a map?

Use the space below to write more details about your location or draw a map.

South Dakota Voter Registration Instructions

How Do I Register to Vote?

Use this form to register to vote in elections in
South Dakota or update your name, address, or
political party.

Am I eligible to vote?

To register to vote in South Dakota, you must:

- Be a U.S. Citizen
- Live in South Dakota for at least 30 days
before the next election
- Be 18 years old on or before the next election

How do I return this form?

- Mail or hand-deliver the form to your County
Auditor's Office
- Make sure it's received at least 15 days
before the next election
- If your registration is accepted, you'll get an
Acknowledgment Notice in the mail

Didn't get your notice?

- Check online: Voter Information Portal
- Or contact your County Auditor: County
Auditor Contact Info

What Are the Recognized Political Parties in South Dakota?

In South Dakota, the recognized political
parties are:

- Democratic Party
- Libertarian Party
- Republican Party

What does "Independent" or "No Party
Affiliation" mean?

Independent (IND) or No Party Affiliation
(NPA) means you are not registered with any
recognized party.

You are considered IND/NPA if:

- You write Independent, I, Ind, no party
affiliation, no party, no choice, nonpartisan,
or cross off the party choice on your voter
registration form.
- You leave the party choice blank on your
voter registration form and are not currently
registered to vote.



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ACTIVE VS. INACTIVE VOTERS

Active Voter: Any voter who has voted or updated their voter registration information in the last four years.

Inactive Voter: Any voter who has not voted or updated their voter registration information in the last four years.

Both active and inactive voters may sign petitions; however, the number of signatures required for a petition is calculated based on the number of **active voters** only.

- SDCL [12-4-34](#) states: “If a statute refers to registered voters, it does not include those in the inactive registration file unless specifically included. However, any voter in the inactive registration file may sign a petition.”

Both active and inactive voters may vote; however, **inactive voters** are required to complete a new voter registration form prior to voting (SDCL [12-18-7.4](#)).

When calculating voter turnout, remember to base is on the number of **active voters** only, just like the signature requirements for petitions.

The active/inactive designation of any voter can be found in the official voter registration file!



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IMPORTANT REMINDERS

The voter registration deadline for an election is 5:00 PM local time fifteen days preceding the election (SDCL [12-4-5](#)). For this year's elections, the voter registration deadlines are:

- May 18th, for a June election; or
- October 19th, for a November election.

The official in charge of a local election must notify the appropriate county auditor(s) of any changes to precinct boundaries at least 100 days (45 days in odd-numbered years) before the date of their election (SDCL [12-14-1.1](#)).

When the boundaries of any election precinct are changed, the county auditor must immediately change the voter registration list (SDCL [12-4-11](#)).





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BALLOT PREPARATION



SOUTH DAKOTA SECRETARY OF STATE – DIVISION OF ELECTIONS

BALLOT TYPES & FORMS

Hand-Counted Paper Ballots: The standard type of ballot for municipal and school district elections.

- These ballots may be printed by you or by a professional printer.

Optical Scan Ballots: Used for automatic tabulating equipment.

- You may use optical scan ballots if you combine with a county's ballot or if you have your own tabulating equipment.

All ballot forms can be found in ARSD [5:02:06](#). The forms for most municipal and school district elections are as follows:

1. Municipal Election – ARSD [5:02:06:12](#)
2. School District Election – ARSD [5:02:06:15](#)
3. Optical Scan – ARSD [5:02:06:01](#); [5:02:06:10](#)

If you are having a combined election using separate, hand-counted paper ballots, one of the ballots must be **white** and the others must be in **contrasting colors** that are not yellow.





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5:02:06:12. Municipal election. The municipal election ballot must be white and must be in the following form:

OFFICIAL MUNICIPAL ELECTION BALLOT
_____, SOUTH DAKOTA
(Election Date)

To vote use a cross (X) or a check mark (✓) in the square in front of the name. DO NOT cast more votes than are allowed in each race.

For Mayor, you may vote for one or leave it blank:

- ☐ John Doe
- ☐ Richard Roe

For (City Commission, City Council, Alderman, Trustee), ____ year term, you may vote for up to ____ or leave it blank:

- ☐ John Doe
- ☐ Richard Roe
- ☐ John Smith

For (City Commission, City Council, Alderman, Trustee), ____ year term, you may vote for one or leave it blank:

- ☐ John Doe
- ☐ Richard Roe

For City Council at Large, ____ year term, you may vote for up to ____ or leave it blank:

- ☐ John Doe
- ☐ Richard Roe
- ☐ John Smith

For City Council at Large, ____ year term, you may vote for one or leave it blank:

- ☐ John Doe
- ☐ Richard Roe

5:02:06:15. School board election. The school board election ballot must be white and must be in the following form:

OFFICIAL SCHOOL BOARD ELECTION BALLOT
_____, SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. _____, SOUTH DAKOTA
(Election Date)

To vote use a cross (X) or a check mark (✓) in the square in front of the name. DO NOT cast more votes than are allowed in each race.

For School Board Member ____ year term, you may vote for up to ____ or leave it blank:

- ☐ John Doe
- ☐ Richard Roe
- ☐ John Smith



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Reverse Side

OFFICIAL GENERAL ELECTION BALLOT		
November	County, South Dakota	
INSTRUCTIONS TO THE VOTER: Insert appropriate instructions from ARSD 5:02:06.01.02		
For Presidential Electors You may vote for <u>one</u> state or leave it blank.	For Secretary of State You may vote for <u>one</u> or leave it blank.	For State Senator, District _____ You may vote for <u>one</u> or leave it blank.
<input type="radio"/> Doe & Ree Electors Party Label John Hall Jane Smith Pat Jones	<input type="radio"/> John Doe Party Label <input type="radio"/> Jane Smith Party Label <input type="radio"/> Pat Jones Independent	<input type="radio"/> John Doe Party Label <input type="radio"/> Jane Smith Party Label <input type="radio"/> Pat Jones Independent
<input type="radio"/> Lee & Jones Electors Party Label Bill Doe John Doe Shannon McGee	For Attorney General You may vote for <u>one</u> or leave it blank.	For State Representative, District _____ You may vote for up to <u>two</u> or leave it blank.
<input type="radio"/> Hill & Hall Electors Party Label Bill Smith Jane Johnson Kim Olson	<input type="radio"/> John Doe Party Label <input type="radio"/> Jane Smith Party Label <input type="radio"/> Pat Jones Independent	<input type="radio"/> John Doe Party Label <input type="radio"/> Jane Smith Party Label <input type="radio"/> Pat Jones Party Label <input type="radio"/> Bill Doe Party Label
INSTRUCTIONS TO THE VOTER: Insert appropriate instructions from ARSD 5:02:06.01.02	For State Auditor You may vote for <u>one</u> or leave it blank.	<input type="radio"/> Shannon McGee Independent <input type="radio"/> Bill Smith Independent
For United States Senator You may vote for <u>one</u> or leave it blank.	<input type="radio"/> John Doe Party Label <input type="radio"/> Jane Smith Party Label <input type="radio"/> Pat Jones Independent	For State Representative, District _____ (A or B) You may vote for <u>one</u> or leave it blank.
<input type="radio"/> John Doe Party Label <input type="radio"/> Jane Smith Party Label <input type="radio"/> Pat Jones Independent	For State Treasurer You may vote for <u>one</u> or leave it blank.	<input type="radio"/> John Doe Party Label <input type="radio"/> Pat Jones Independent
For United States Representative You may vote for <u>one</u> or leave it blank.	<input type="radio"/> John Doe Party Label <input type="radio"/> Jane Smith Party Label <input type="radio"/> Pat Jones Independent	For (County Treasurer) or (County Finance Officer) You may vote for <u>one</u> or leave it blank.
<input type="radio"/> John Doe Party Label <input type="radio"/> Jane Smith Party Label <input type="radio"/> Pat Jones Independent	For Commissioner of School and Public Lands You may vote for <u>one</u> or leave it blank.	<input type="radio"/> John Doe Party Label <input type="radio"/> Jane Smith Party Label <input type="radio"/> Pat Jones Independent
For Governor and Lieutenant Governor To be elected as a team, you may vote for <u>one</u> or leave it blank.	<input type="radio"/> John Doe Party Label <input type="radio"/> Jane Smith Party Label <input type="radio"/> Pat Jones Independent	For (County Auditor) or (County Finance Officer) You may vote for <u>one</u> or leave it blank.
<input type="radio"/> John Doe Party Label for Governor and Jane Doe for Lieutenant Governor	For Public Utilities Commissioner You may vote for <u>one</u> or leave it blank.	<input type="radio"/> John Doe Party Label <input type="radio"/> Jane Smith Party Label <input type="radio"/> Pat Jones Independent
<input type="radio"/> Pat Jones Party Label for Governor and Kim Olson for Lieutenant Governor	<input type="radio"/> John Doe Party Label <input type="radio"/> Jane Smith Party Label <input type="radio"/> Pat Jones Independent	For States Attorney You may vote for <u>one</u> or leave it blank.
<input type="radio"/> Mary Johnson Independent for Governor and Shannon McGee for Lieutenant Governor	<input type="radio"/> John Doe Party Label <input type="radio"/> Jane Smith Party Label <input type="radio"/> Pat Jones Independent	<input type="radio"/> John Doe <input type="radio"/> Jane Smith <input type="radio"/> Pat Jones
Go to top of next column	Go to top of next column	Turn Page

Front Side

OFFICIAL PARTY PRIMARY ELECTION BALLOT		
June	County, South Dakota	
INSTRUCTIONS TO THE VOTER: Insert appropriate instructions from ARSD 5:02:06.01.02		
For Presidential Delegates and Alternates You may vote for <u>one</u> state or leave it blank.	For United States Senator You may vote for <u>one</u> or leave it blank.	For State Representative, District _____ (A or B) You may vote for <u>one</u> or leave it blank.
<input type="radio"/> Candidates preferring John Hall for President Delegates: John Doe Jane Doe Pat Jones	<input type="radio"/> John Doe <input type="radio"/> Jane Smith <input type="radio"/> Pat Jones	<input type="radio"/> John Doe <input type="radio"/> Jane Smith <input type="radio"/> Pat Jones
Pat Jones Alternates: John Doe Jane Doe Pat Jones	For United States Representative You may vote for <u>one</u> or leave it blank.	For (County Treasurer) or (County Finance Officer) You may vote for <u>one</u> or leave it blank.
<input type="radio"/> Candidates preferring Jane Smith for President Delegates: John Doe Jane Doe Pat Jones Alternates: John Doe	<input type="radio"/> John Doe <input type="radio"/> Jane Smith <input type="radio"/> Pat Jones	<input type="radio"/> John Doe <input type="radio"/> Jane Smith <input type="radio"/> Pat Jones
Jane Doe Pat Jones	For Governor You may vote for <u>one</u> or leave it blank.	For States Attorney You may vote for <u>one</u> or leave it blank.
<input type="radio"/> Candidates preferring Pat Jones for President Delegates: John Doe Jane Doe Pat Jones Alternates: John Doe Jane Doe Pat Jones	<input type="radio"/> John Doe <input type="radio"/> Jane Smith <input type="radio"/> Pat Jones	<input type="radio"/> John Doe <input type="radio"/> Jane Smith <input type="radio"/> Pat Jones
Pat Jones	For State Senator, District _____ You may vote for <u>one</u> or leave it blank.	For Sheriff You may vote for <u>one</u> or leave it blank.
<input type="radio"/> Candidates preferring Pat Jones for President Delegates: John Doe Jane Doe Pat Jones Alternates: John Doe Jane Doe Pat Jones	<input type="radio"/> John Doe <input type="radio"/> Jane Smith <input type="radio"/> Pat Jones	<input type="radio"/> John Doe <input type="radio"/> Jane Smith <input type="radio"/> Pat Jones
Pat Jones	For State Representative, District _____ You may vote for up to <u>two</u> or leave it blank.	For (County Auditor) or (County Finance Officer) You may vote for <u>one</u> or leave it blank.
<input type="radio"/> John Doe <input type="radio"/> Jane Smith <input type="radio"/> Pat Jones	<input type="radio"/> John Doe <input type="radio"/> Jane Smith <input type="radio"/> Pat Jones	<input type="radio"/> John Doe <input type="radio"/> Jane Smith <input type="radio"/> Pat Jones
INSTRUCTIONS TO THE VOTER: Insert appropriate instructions from ARSD 5:02:06.01.02	For Delegates to support a Presidential Candidate You may vote for <u>one</u> or leave it blank.	For Register of Deeds You may vote for <u>one</u> or leave it blank.
<input type="radio"/> Delegates to support John Doe <input type="radio"/> Delegates to support Jane Smith <input type="radio"/> Delegates to support Pat Jones	<input type="radio"/> Bill Doe <input type="radio"/> Shannon McGee <input type="radio"/> Bill Smith	<input type="radio"/> John Doe <input type="radio"/> Jane Smith <input type="radio"/> Pat Jones
Go to top of next column	Go to top of next column	Turn Page



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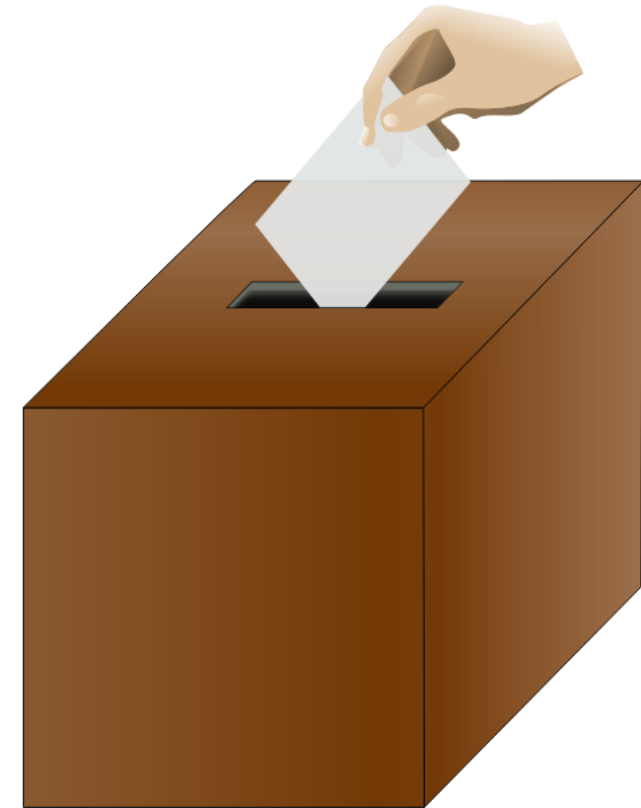
CANDIDATE ORDER

Candidate order is determined by lot for both municipalities and school districts ([SDCL 9-13-21](#); [13-7-13](#)).

- Candidates may have a representative present to observe the drawing, and we recommend that you notify each candidate when you are preparing to draw for candidate order.
- Be sure to have at least one other person present with you when the drawing takes place, even if it is just another person from your office.

A candidate's name should be placed on the ballot **exactly** as it appears on the candidate's petition.

- Do not include titles or political party affiliation.
- Do not list or mark a candidate as an incumbent.
- Nicknames can sometimes be used (e.g., William "Bill" Smith).





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ADDITIONAL NOTES

Remember to proofread your ballots and have multiple people verify that they are correct!

If you are using optical scan ballots, you will need to provide voters with the instructions listed in ARSD [5:02:06:01.02](#).

- You will need to work with your vendor to have them placed on the ballot.

Please work with your attorneys when preparing your ballots and finalizing any ballot language.

If you would like us to verify the format of your ballots, please feel free to email us at the email provided on Slide 2.

5:02:06:01.02. Optical scan ballot instructions. The instructions to voters found on optical scan ballots shall be enclosed in a box. The appropriate instructions shall be placed at the top of the first column containing presidential electors (subdivision 1 and 8) or presidential delegates and alternates (subdivision 2 or 3 and 8), at the beginning of the portion containing other candidates (subdivision 4 and 8) and at the beginning of the portion containing ballot questions (subdivision 5 and 8). The instructions for all elections must be in the following form without the subdivision numbers:

- (1) To vote for a group of presidential electors FILL IN (Bold) the oval (●) next to the names.
- (2) If the delegates and alternates are printed on the ballot use: To vote for a group of presidential delegates and alternates FILL IN (Bold) the oval (●) next to the names.
- (3) If the political party does not have the delegates and alternates on the ballot use: To vote for a person FILL IN (Bold) the oval (●) next to the name.
- (4) To vote for a person FILL IN (Bold) the oval (●) next to the name.
- (5) To vote on a ballot question FILL IN (Bold) the oval (●) next to "yes" or "no".
- (6) Use only a pencil or pen.
- (7) If you make a mistake, give the ballot back and get a new one.
- (8) DO NOT (Bold) cast more votes than are allowed in each race.

Printers note: Subdivisions 6 and 7 shall be included in the first instruction box only. If the ballot has columns, the words "Go to top of next column" shall be printed on the bottom of any column preceding each column to be voted. If the ballot has races on the back side, the words "Turn page" shall be printed in the lower right corner.



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ABSENTEE VOTING



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TIMELINE & GUIDE

Any registered voter may, without a reason, vote by absentee ballot (SDCL [12-19-1](#)).

For municipal and school district elections, absentee ballots must be made available no later than **fifteen days** prior to the election (SDCL [9-13-21](#); [13-7-13](#)).

- Absentee ballots **may** be made available more than fifteen days prior to the election, but this should not be done too early in order to avoid confusion.
- It is always best to work with your jurisdiction's attorney when planning an alternate absentee voting timeline.

If you combine with the primary or general election and will be having contests on the county ballot, absentee ballots must be made available **forty-six days** prior to the election (SDCL [9-13-21](#); [12-19-1.2](#); [13-7-13](#)).

- In this case, the county auditor should be responsible for the absentee voting process, but you may still assist them as needed.

If you will be conducting absentee voting for your jurisdiction, please see our Absentee Voting Guide for more information on the process: <https://sdsos.gov/elections-voting/assets/AbsenteeVotingProcessSchoolCity.pdf>.



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ABSENTEE BALLOT APPLICATION FORM(S)

Most individuals who request an absentee ballot will do so using the official absentee ballot application prescribed in ARSD [5:02:10:01](#).

- This form can be found on the Secretary of State's website:
<https://sdsos.gov/elections-voting/voting/absentee-voting.aspx>.

You may also see other forms being used, mainly by individuals covered by the Uniformed and Overseas Citizen Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA): Members of the Armed Forces, overseas citizens, and spouses or dependents.

- These forms include:
 - The Federal Post Card Application (FPCA); and
 - Written requests, which must include everything on the standard absentee ballot application form.

Any absentee ballot application form must be signed, dated, and complete. All signatures must be **original**, not electronic.

South Dakota - Absentee Ballot Request Form

County _____

Use this form to request an absentee ballot.

Name **Required**

1 Last Name _____ First Name _____ Middle Name _____ Suffix _____

Voter Registration Address **Required**

Write your voter registration address and/or describe where you live. Failure to provide a voter registration address and/or a description of the location of your residence will give rise to the presumption that you are not a resident of this state for the purposes of SDCL 12-1-4 and will result in you being designated a federal voter.

2 Voter Registration Address _____ Apt # or Lot # _____

City or Town _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

OR

If you live in a rural area and do not have a street address; if your address is a commercial mail receiving agency, mail forwarding service, or other post office box; or if you have no address, please describe the physical location of your residence in writing or by drawing a map, which may include writing the names of the streets or intersections nearest to where you live and listing any landmarks (e.g., schools, churches, stores) near where you live, in the space provided. If you do not have enough room in the space provided, use the back of this form.

Mailing Address

If different from your address in section 2

3 Mailing Address _____ Apt # or Lot # _____

City or Town _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Choose Your Election(s) and Ballot Styles **Required**

4 Please choose from the following:

☐ All ☐ General ☐ Primary ☐ Municipal ☐ School ☐ Any Other

You will receive the Primary Election ballot of your party, if one is available. If you are registered as an independent/ no party affiliation voter and are requesting a Primary Election ballot, you may choose one of the following:

☐ Democratic ☐ Libertarian ☐ Non-Political

If the Request is for a Municipal or School Election

5 I have lived in the jurisdiction for at least 30 days in the last year. ☐ Yes ☐ No

I am a full-time student who resided in the jurisdiction prior to leaving. ☐ Yes ☐ No

I am a member of the Uniformed Services or Merchant Marine on active duty whose home of record is within this jurisdiction. ☐ Yes ☐ No

Military and Overseas Citizens Only

Any person who answers "Yes" to one of the following questions is not required to submit a copy of the voter's ID.

6 I am a member of the Uniformed Services or Merchant Marine on active duty. ☐ Yes ☐ No

I am a U.S. citizen residing outside the United States. ☐ Yes ☐ No

I am an eligible spouse or dependent of a member of the Uniformed Services or Merchant Marine on active duty. ☐ Yes ☐ No

Any military and overseas voter may submit a signed application for an absentee ballot by fax or e-mail.

☐ For a Primary or General Election, send my ballot electronically using my email address. Email Address _____

Identification and Declaration **Required**

Choose one:

You may sign an oath in front of a notary public; or Submit a copy of a valid photo ID. Check the instructions on the back for a list of all accepted forms of identification.

7 ☐ I hereby verify that I am the person named above and these statements made by me on this application are true and correct. OR ☐ I have attached a copy of photo identification.

Voter, sign here (If a notary is required, you must sign your name in front of the notary and not before.)

Today's Date _____

Month _____ Day _____ Year _____

For notary (If no photo identification is attached.)

Sworn to me before this _____ day of _____, 20____

Notary signature _____

My commission expires _____

(Notary Seal)

Turn over for instructions and additional questions

ARSD 5:02:10:01 - January 1, 2026



SOUTH DAKOTA SECRETARY OF STATE – DIVISION OF ELECTIONS

ABSENTEE BALLOT APPLICATION REMINDERS

Make sure to check the registration list before sending an application or ballot to an individual.

If an individual is not registered or is inactive, include a voter registration form with any application that you send.

If an individual is not registered or is inactive but submits an absentee ballot application form, they must complete and submit a voter registration form before absentee ballots are processed.

- It is important to instruct a voter to send their voter registration form back separately, not with their ballot.

Give absentee voting your complete attention, since there are only fifteen days for absentee voting!





SOUTH DAKOTA SECRETARY OF STATE – DIVISION OF ELECTIONS

ABSENTEE BALLOT LOG

You are required to keep an absentee ballot log (SDCL [12-19-2](#)).

- This log is a **public record**.

The contents required in an absentee ballot log are prescribed in ARSD [5:02:10:06](#) and include:

1. Date of election and party designation if primary ballot;
2. Name of voter;
3. Current mailing address of voter;
4. Voting precinct;
5. Regular or UOCAVA voter;
6. Date mailed to voter, given to authorized messenger, or voted in office;
7. Name of authorized messenger;
8. Date returned;
9. Date application received;
10. Email address if electronic transmission requested by UOCAVA voter (only for elections run by a county auditor); and
11. Voter registration address.



SOUTH DAKOTA SECRETARY OF STATE – DIVISION OF ELECTIONS

ID REQUIREMENTS

In-Person Absentee: The voter must show a valid form of personal identification (SDCL [12-18-6.1](#)) or complete a personal identification affidavit (SDCL [12-18-6.2](#)).

- Valid forms of personal identification include:
 1. A South Dakota driver's license or nondriver identification card;
 2. A passport or an identification card, including a picture, issued by an agency of the United States government;
 3. A tribal identification card, including a picture; or
 4. A current student identification card, including a picture, issued by a high school or an accredited institution of higher education located within the State of South Dakota.

Mail-In Absentee: The absentee ballot application form must be notarized or accompanied by a copy of a valid form of personal identification (SDCL [12-18-6.1](#); [12-19-2.1](#)).

UOCAVA: Voter identification requirements are waived for all voters covered under UOCAVA, and UOCAVA voters may request an absentee ballot by email or fax (SDCL [12-19-2.3](#)).

- Municipalities and school districts **may not** send ballots to UOCAVA voters electronically (i.e., by email).



SOUTH DAKOTA SECRETARY OF STATE – DIVISION OF ELECTIONS

AUTHORIZED MESSENGERS

An individual who is confined because of **sickness** or **disability** may designate an authorized messenger on their absentee ballot application, and the authorized messenger may bring them a ballot (SDCL 12-19-2.1).

- A request to have a ballot delivered by an authorized messenger must be received by 3:00 PM on the day of an election (SDCL [12-19-2.1](#)).
- Work is **not** considered confinement because employers are required to allow their employees to take up to two hours off in order to vote (SDCL [12-3-5](#)).

A **candidate** for any elective office cannot be an authorized messenger (SDCL [12-19-7.1](#)). Authorized messengers may not, in the presence of a voter at or before the time of voting, display campaign materials or solicit any votes for or against any person, political party, or position on a ballot question (SDCL [12-19-7.2](#)).

If an individual is an authorized messenger for more than one voter, they must notify the person in charge of the election of all voters for whom they are an authorized messenger (SDCL [12-19-2.2](#)). ***You must also keep a record of authorized messengers!***

If a nursing home requests that you bring ballots to its residents to allow them to vote, you **may not** do so. Only the county auditor may do so for a primary or general election (SDCL [12-19-9.1](#)).



SOUTH DAKOTA SECRETARY OF STATE – DIVISION OF ELECTIONS

IN-PERSON ABSENTEE VOTING

Use this process for any voter who wants to vote by absentee ballot in your office:

1. Check the voter registration list.
2. Confirm that the voter would like to vote in-person absentee.
3. Have the voter fill out a combined absentee ballot application and envelope.
4. The voter must show a valid form of identification or complete a personal identification affidavit.
5. Give the voter the correct ballot.
6. Update your absentee ballot log.

You should have appropriate booths set up for voters to use. You should also have a ballot box in a place where voters can deposit their envelopes or in a visible area if you are depositing their envelopes.

5:02:10:01.03 - Combined absentee ballot application/return envelope (01/10)

APPLICATION FOR IN-OFFICE ABSENTEE BALLOT

COUNTY, SOUTH DAKOTA

My printed name as it appears on the voter registration list is: _____

My voter registration residence address is: _____ (address) _____ (city)

Check the election for which you are requesting an absentee ballot:

☐ Primary If you are registered as an independent and are requesting a primary ballot, you may have a choice of ballots.
Please check one of the following: ☐ Non-political ballot or ☐ Democratic Party ballot

☐ General
☐ Municipal
☐ School
☐ Special _____ (specify jurisdiction)

If request is for a municipal or school election:
I have lived in that jurisdiction at least 30 days in the last year. Yes ☐ No ☐
I am a full-time postsecondary student who resided in that jurisdiction immediately prior to leaving for postsecondary education. Yes ☐ No ☐
I am on active duty military and my home of record is in that jurisdiction. Yes ☐ No ☐

I, under penalty of impersonating a registered voter (5 years imprisonment and \$10,000 fine), state that I am the person named above, these statements made by me are true and correct, and that I will vote the ballot which will be enclosed in this envelope.

Voter Signature Date _____

INSTRUCTIONS TO THE VOTER:

- Mark your ballot privately.
- Do not fold your ballot.
- Place your ballot in this envelope and seal it securely.
- Return the envelope immediately to the person in charge of the election.

Auditor Office Use Only:
Voter Precinct: _____ Type of ID: _____



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MAIL-IN ABSENTEE VOTING

Use this process for any voter who wants to vote by absentee ballot through the mail.

When you receive an absentee ballot application, you should verify:

- Is the person a registered voter?
- Is the application signed and completed?
- Is the application notarized (i.e., signed by an official authorized to administer oaths) or accompanied by a copy of a valid form of identification, or has the application been submitted by a UOCAVA voter?

If everything has been completed correctly, send the voter the correct ballot, instructions (ARSD [5:02:10:04](#)), and a return envelop (ARSD [5:02:10:05](#)). ***Remember to update your absentee ballot log!***

- There is a different return envelope for UOCAVA voters that has free postage if mailed through a U.S. postal system (ARSD [5:02:10:08](#)).





SOUTH DAKOTA SECRETARY OF STATE – DIVISION OF ELECTIONS

ABSENTEE BALLOT PROCESSING

Your election board will process absentee ballots at the polling place when they have time on the day of the election or immediately after polls close (SDCL [12-19-10](#)).

- No absentee ballots may be accepted after polls close (SDCL [12-19-12](#)).

Processing includes:

1. Comparing the signature on the ballot envelope with the signature on the application, except for in-person absentee ballots.
2. Marking the registration list and entering the voter's name in the pollbook.
3. Opening the envelop, placing the official ballot stamp on the ballot, and putting the ballot in the ballot box.





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ADDITIONAL NOTES

Absentee ballot applications must be received by 5:00 PM or the end of regular office hours on the day before an election, whichever is later (SDCL [12-19-2.1](#)). An exception is that a request for an absentee ballot to be delivered by authorized messenger, which must be received by 3:00 PM on the day of an election (SDCL [12-19-2.1](#)).

- All ballots must be returned by the time that polls close at 7:00 PM on the day of an election (SDCL [12-19-12](#)).

A voter may submit a single absentee ballot application for all elections in a calendar year (SDCL [12-19-2](#)).

- If the voter's address changes after submitting an application, they must submit a new one.
- If you receive an application that covers elections outside of your jurisdictions, send a copy of the application to election officials in the other jurisdictions.
 - ***Make sure your county auditor(s) have an up-to-date email address that they can send applications to!***

An individual may **not** use a power of attorney to sign an application for another person. The voter requesting an absentee ballot must make some kind of mark, which a witness may clarify by writing the voter's name and their own name indicating that they were a witness (SDCL [2-14-2\(25\)](#)).

If an individual dies after submitting an absentee ballot, the ballot may not be processed or counted and should be pulled and labeled with "Unopened by reason of death of voter" (SDCL [12-19-9.2](#)).



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PRECINCTS



SOUTH DAKOTA SECRETARY OF STATE – DIVISION OF ELECTIONS

PRECINCTS – MUNICIPALITIES

For municipalities, each ward is considered a precinct for election purposes (SDCL [9-13-16](#)).

- For municipalities conducting combined elections with a county, you will need to work with the county auditor to determine which precincts will be used.

Precinct boundaries must be changed by ordinance prior to the publication of your first **notice of election**. You should also ensure that there is sufficient time for the county auditor to make changes to the voter file.

If all wards use the same polling place, a single election board may be appointed (SDCL [9-13-36](#)).

If all wards are voting in an election, a single election board, ballot box, and pollbook may be used if the ward ballots are different colors (SDCL [9-13-36](#)).

PRECINCTS – SCHOOL DISTRICTS

For school districts, precincts and polling places are determined by the school board (SDCL [13-7-11](#)).

- For school district conducting combined elections with a county, you will need to work with the county auditor to determine which precincts will be used.

Precinct boundaries can only be changed prior to the publication of your first **notice of election**. You should also ensure that there is sufficient time for the county auditor to make changes to the voter file.

REMINDER!

You must notify the appropriate county auditor(s) of any changes to your precinct boundaries at least 100 days (45 days in odd-numbered years) before the date of your election (SDCL [12-14-1.1](#)).



SOUTH DAKOTA SECRETARY OF STATE – DIVISION OF ELECTIONS

ELECTION WORKERS



SOUTH DAKOTA SECRETARY OF STATE – DIVISION OF ELECTIONS

APPOINTING ELECTION WORKERS

Per SDCL [9-13-16.1](#) and [13-7-12](#), election workers are appointed by the governing body of your municipality or school board.

- The notice of appointment is established in ARSD [5:02:05:11.01](#).
- There must be at least one precinct superintendent and two precinct deputies.
- If you are combining with a county for your election, you will need to work with the county auditor when appointing election workers. ***Follow your agreement!***

Choose election workers that you trust and try to use experienced election workers when possible.

School board members may serve as election workers, provided that they are not on the ballot or related within the second degree to a candidate on the ballot.

5:02:05:11.01. Notice of appointment of election officials for school or municipal election. The notice of appointment of election officials for school district or municipal elections must be in the following form:

STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA)
) SS
COUNTY OF _____)

MUNICIPALITY OF _____ (or)
_____ SCHOOL DISTRICT
NOTICE OF APPOINTMENT

To: _____ Precinct Superintendent
 _____ Precinct Deputy
 _____ Precinct Deputy
 _____ Precinct Deputy
 _____ Precinct Deputy

You are appointed as precinct election board members for the _____ election for _____ (Ward/Precinct). This election will be held at (polling place) from _____ a.m. to 7:00 p.m., local time, on the _____ day of _____, 20____.

If you are unable to serve, please contact the person in charge of the election immediately.

Dated this _____ day of _____, 20____.

(Signed) _____
Municipal Finance Officer or School Business Manager

Source: 12 SDR 43, effective September 23, 1985; 25 SDR 167, effective July 6, 1999.

General Authority: SDCL 12-1-9(4).

Law Implemented: SDCL 9-13-16.1, 13-7-12.



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APPOINTING ELECTION WORKERS (CONT'D)

Election workers must be registered to vote and reside in the precinct in which they will be working (SDCL [12-5-2](#)).

- You may appoint someone from outside the precinct if there are **no other options**.

Election workers may not be related within the second degree to a candidate on the ballot (SDCL [12-15-14.3](#)).

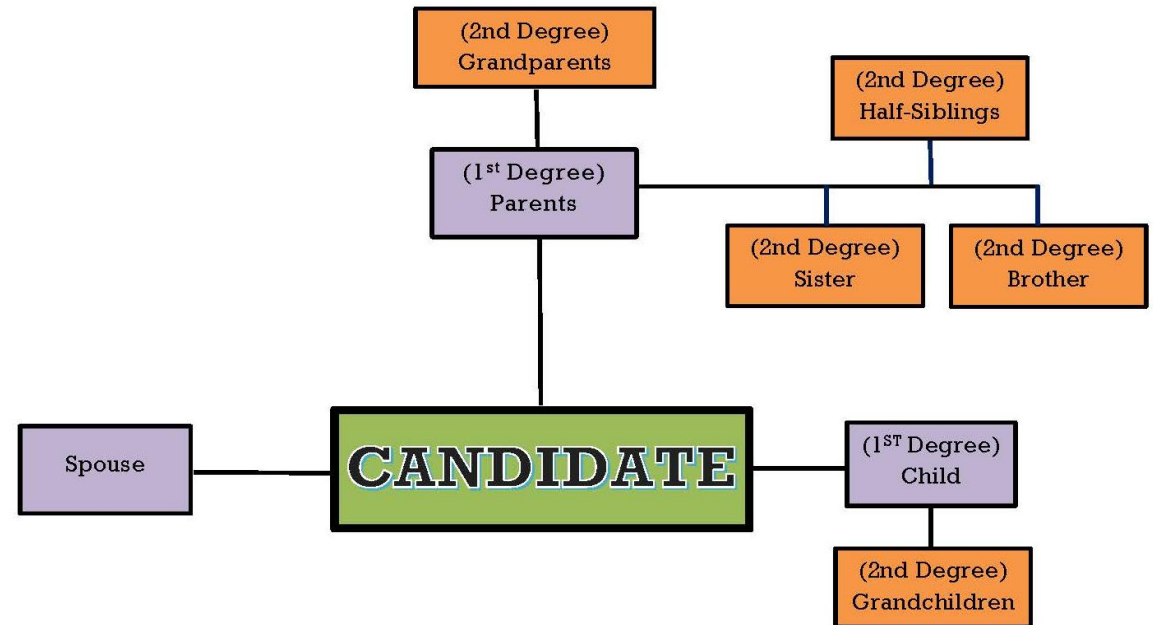
Election workers may not be poll watchers (SDCL [12-15-2.1](#)).

An 18-year-old student may be excused from school to be an election official (SDCL [13-27-6.1](#)).

DEGREE OF KINSHIP CHART

(This chart only includes relationships that cannot serve as a poll worker)

SDCL 12-15-14.3. No person may serve on an election or counting board who is a candidate or related by blood or marriage within the second degree to candidate who is on the ballot in that precinct.





SOUTH DAKOTA SECRETARY OF STATE – DIVISION OF ELECTIONS

TRAINING ELECTION WORKERS

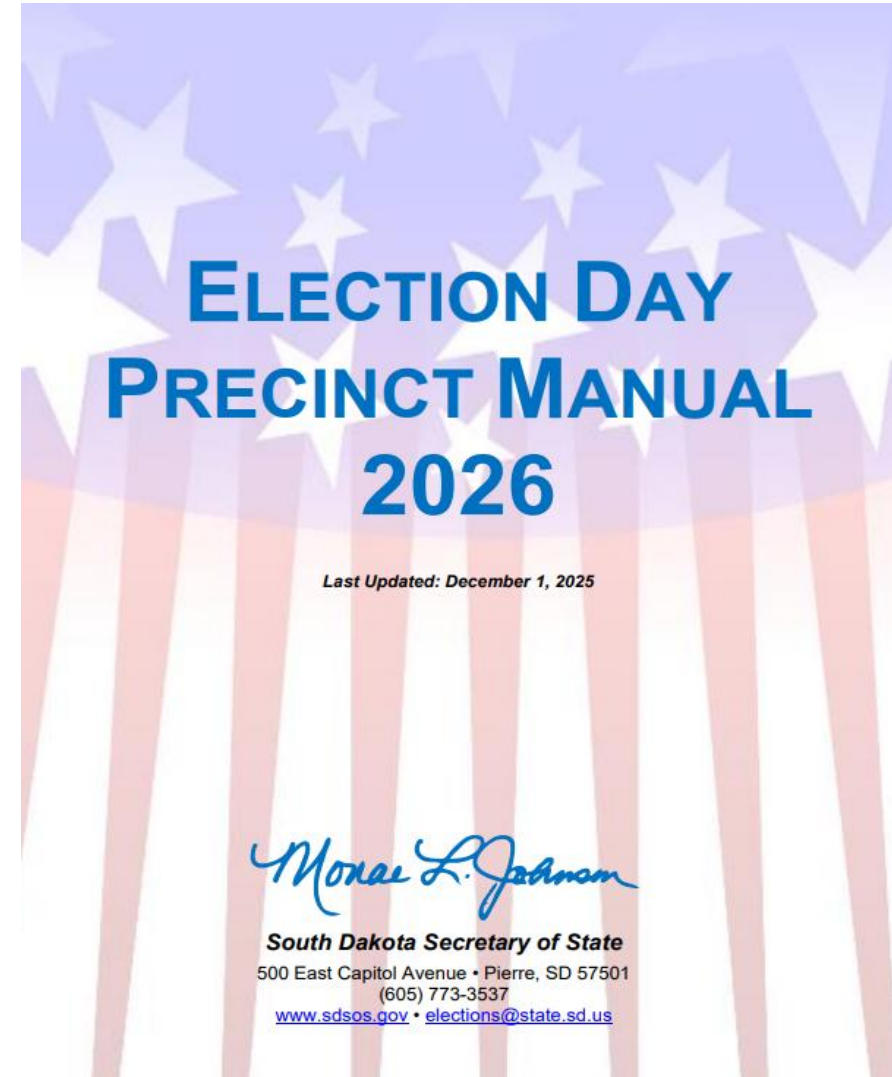
As election officials, it is your responsibility to ensure that your election workers are properly trained and ready to perform their duties on the day of the election.

The Secretary of State's office has produced two documents for you to use when training election workers.

The [Election Worker Training PowerPoint](#) is meant to help you instruct your election workers prior to election day.

The [Election Day Precinct Manual](#) is a shorter guide for your election workers to reference if they have any questions on the day of the election.

Let's take a quick look at these materials!





SOUTH DAKOTA SECRETARY OF STATE – DIVISION OF ELECTIONS

QUESTIONS?