Voting 101: A Resource Guide for Student Voters

CAREER & CIVIC ENGAGEMENT CENTER

BRYN MAWR COLLEGE

Eligibility

In order to vote in US elections, individuals must be:

- ✓ A US citizen for at least one month before the next election
- ✓ 18 years old on or by Election Day
- ✓ Meet their state's requirements for voter registration

In Pennsylvania, voters must be a resident of Pennsylvania and your election district for at least 30 days prior to the date of the election.

Bryn Mawr College students living on campus **ARE ELIGIBLE to register to vote in Pennsylvania**

Options

Bryn Mawr College students living on campus have two choices regarding voter registration:

1. Register to vote in Pennsylvania, using their Bryn Mawr College address

OR

2. Register—or remain registered—and vote at their permanent/home address

Students who register to vote in PA using their BMC College address may either vote by mail or vote in person at our local polling place on Election Day. Students who opt to vote in person must adhere to College and Montgomery County guidelines on masking and social distancing.

Students who register (or remain registered) at their prior home address must either travel home to vote at their assigned polling place on Election Day or vote by submitting an absentee ballot prior to Election Day. Absentee & mail-in ballots must be requested in advance.

Deciding where to register and, ultimately, where to vote is a personal choice and one each student must make individually.

How to Register to Vote In Pennsylvania

The Career & Civic Engagement Center has pre-printed PA Voter Registration forms along with free mailing envelopes available in the Campus Center.

To print your own PA Voter Registration form, click on this link:

PA Downloadable Voter Registration Form

Online PA voter registration is available at the following address:

https://www.pavoterservices.pa.gov/Pages/VoterRegistrationApplication.aspx

**Please review the information on the following slides
BEFORE beginning to fill in your paper or online voter registration application**

PA Voter Registration: Which Should I Choose?

- ❑ New Registration?
- ❑ Change of Name?
- ❑ Change of Address?
- ❑ Change of Party?
- ❑ Federal or State Employee Registering in County of Last Residence?

Most Bryn Mawr undergraduate students will choose “New Registration”

- If you have recently moved to Pennsylvania from another state and you were registered to vote at your out of state address, you should select “New Registration” rather than “Change of Address” because you are considered a new voter in the state of Pennsylvania

* Select “Change of Address” **only if** you were previously registered to vote **IN PENNSYLVANIA** at a different address

What Address Should I Use?

If you are a Bryn Mawr College undergraduate student who is living on campus, you should use your College mailing address as your residence address:

Street Address: 101 North Merion Avenue, C-XXX *(insert your own campus mailbox # here)*

City: Bryn Mawr

State: PA

Zip Code: 19010

County: Montgomery

Municipality: Lower Merion

Wait!! Why Shouldn't I Use My Dorm Address?

- Your College mailing address is your official Bryn Mawr College address
- Your dorm address may change from year to year, necessitating a change of address re-registration, whereas your College mailing address is your consistent, 4-year address
- Using your College mailing address ensures that you will vote at the College's designated polling place on Election Day—using your dorm's address may result in being assigned to a different polling location

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Selecting Political Party Affiliation

In Pennsylvania, you will be asked to select from one of the following choices to identify your political affiliation. You must select one of the options—**you may not leave this section blank**.

- ❑ Democratic
- ❑ Republican
- ❑ Independent
- ❑ Green (online form only)
- ❑ Libertarian (online form only)
- ❑ None (No Affiliation)
- ❑ Other _____

What do I need to know?

Pennsylvania is a "Closed Primary" state. This means that only voters who have registered their affiliation with either the Democratic or Republican party will be permitted to vote in Primary Elections.

If voting in the Primary Elections is important to you, you must identify as either a Democrat or Republican.

Dealing with Previous Voter Registrations

- ✓ If you are registering to vote for the first time, you can leave the questions related to previous voter registration and addresses blank.

- ✓ If you were registered to vote in PA at a different address **OR** if you were registered to vote in another state, you will need to provide the following:

  Previous Voter Registration Number (if you have it—if not, it's okay to leave this blank)

  Previous Last Name (last name used on prior registration)

  Previous First Name (first name used on prior registration)

  Previous Middle Name (middle name used on prior registration)

  Address of Previous Registration

  City of Previous Registration

  State of Previous Registration

  Zip Code of Previous Registration

  County of Previous Registration

  Year of Previous Registration (the year you registered to vote at previous location)

What Next?

Paper Pennsylvania Voter Registration Application:

Mail your completed Pennsylvania voter registration application to the following address

Montgomery County Voter Services
PO Box 311
Norristown, PA 19104-0311

*If you are mailing in a paper form and **DID NOT** use the Bryn Mawr College mailing address as your address, see a staff member in Civic Engagement for assistance.*

Online Pennsylvania Voter Registration Application:

Click the box that affirms that you are signing your application electronically
Click “Continue” and submit your application

Confirm Your Registration

Within 7 – 10 days after submitting your voter registration application, look for a PA Voter Registration Card in your campus mailbox

Confirm your status as a registered PA voter by using this link:

Https://www.pavoterservices.pa.gov/Pages/voterregistrationstatus.aspx

Check the Career & Civic Engagement website for updates regarding resources and polling place location: https://www.brynmawr.edu/career-civic/student-funding-and-resources/voting-information

Information About Mail-In Ballots for Pennsylvania Voters

On October 31, 2019, Governor Wolf signed Act 77 of 2019 into law. The Act is an historic election reform bill that makes the most significant improvements to Pennsylvania's elections in more than 80 years. Act 77 allows more convenient and secure voting. Most voters can now vote by mail-in ballot, and voters will have more time to register to vote and to return their absentee or mail-in ballots.

What's the difference between a Mail In Ballot and an Absentee Ballot?

Mail In Ballots:

Anyone may apply for a mail in ballot. As long as you are a registered voter, you may vote by mail and will not need to provide a reason or excuse for requesting a mail in ballot

Absentee Ballots Are For Voters in the Following Categories:

- College students **who are not registered to vote at their school address**
- People whose work or vacation take them away from the municipality where they live
- Those with a physical disability or illness that prevents them from going to the polling place
- Members of the military
- People who may have a conflict due to the celebration of a religious holiday
- People who are incarcerated and who haven't been convicted of a felony

Requesting a PA Mail-In Ballot

To apply for a Pennsylvania Mail In ballot, visit the following link:

https://www.pavoterservices.pa.gov/OnlineAbsenteeApplication/#/OnlineAbsenteeBegin

*** Make sure you select the application for a Mail In Ballot ***

Confirm that you are registered to vote in Pennsylvania using the link provided on the site

If you have a Pennsylvania driver's license, you may request a mail-in ballot online (https://www.pavoterservices.pa.gov/OnlineAbsenteeApplication/#/OnlineAbsenteeBegin)

If you do not have a Pennsylvania driver's license, you will need to download and print a paper application (https://www.votespa.com/Register-to-Vote/Documents/PADOS_mailInapplication.pdf)

Send the application via US Mail to: Montgomery County Voter Services, PO Box 311, Norristown, PA 19404-0311

If you do not have access to a printer, please contact Ellie Esmond (eesmond@brynmawr.edu) and she will print a copy and send it to you via US Mail along with an envelope and a stamp.

Pennsylvania Deadlines

Voter Registration:

- In Pennsylvania, voter registration applications must be submitted at least 15 days before the next election.

Mail In Ballot Applications:

- The last day to apply for a PA Mail In ballot is 5 p.m. on the Tuesday before the day of the election. Please note that **postmarks do not apply** and original applications must be received (no facsimiles or emails).

Voted Ballots:

- All completed mail in ballots must be returned to the Montgomery County Board of Elections Office before 8 pm on Election Day. Please note that **postmarks do not apply**.

Information About Absentee Voting for Voters Registered in Other States

If you are a registered voter in a state other than Pennsylvania, you will either need to travel home to vote in your assigned polling place or request and mail in a completed absentee ballot for your state.

The deadlines and procedures for requesting and submitting absentee ballots vary from state to state, so **make sure to look up your state's requirements and follow them carefully**.

Rock the Vote provides a helpful guide for educating yourself about the procedure for voting via absentee ballot in your state:

https://www.rockthevote.org/voting-information/

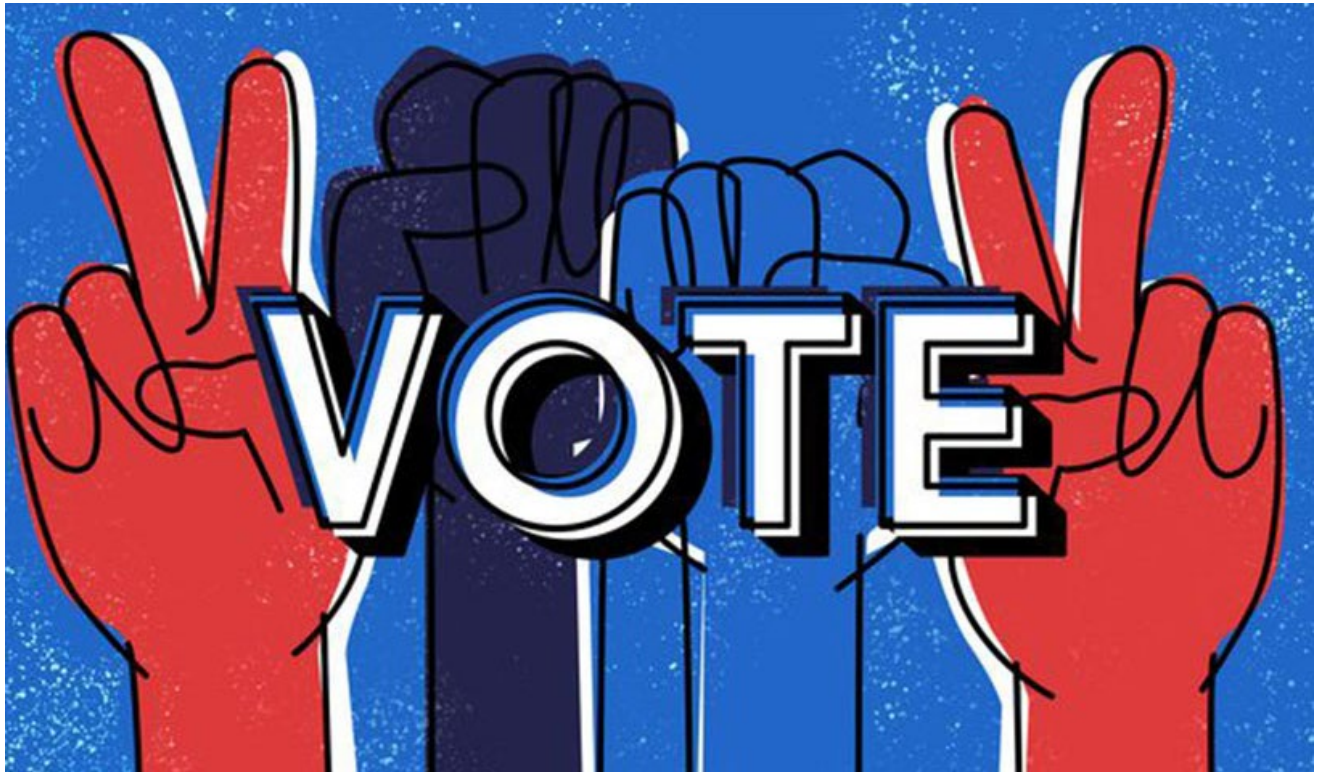
Student Voters Studying Abroad

Students studying abroad are still eligible to register to vote and cast their vote using an absentee ballot from their overseas location.

The Overseas Vote Foundation's website provides information to guide students studying abroad through the voter registration and absentee ballot request process:

https://www.overseasvotefoundation.org/vote/home.htm

Resources & Support



Visit the Career & Civic Engagement Center's Voting Information webpage for updated information about student voting in the next election!

If you have any questions about voter registration, please contact:

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