



## BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO ELECTIONS IN FLORIDA

*A Simple Overview of How, When, and Where to Vote in the Sunshine State*

Florida's election process can feel complex — with different rules, deadlines, and election types depending on the year and jurisdiction. This guide gives voters a clear, practical overview of how it all works. From understanding the kinds of elections held in Florida to knowing when to register, what ID to bring, and how to vote, this resource equips you with the essential tools to participate confidently and effectively—whether you're a first-time voter or just need a refresher.

## TYPES OF ELECTIONS IN FLORIDA

Florida voters participate in many types of elections beyond just the presidential cycle. This section outlines the five most common types of elections and ballot events you may encounter as a Florida voter each with its own timing, rules, and level of impact.

### GENERAL ELECTIONS

General elections determine who will hold office at the local, state, and federal levels. These elections are open to all registered voters, regardless of party affiliation, and typically appear on the ballot in even-numbered years. Held on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November of even-numbered years.

#### General elections include races for:

- President and Vice President
- County and Local Offices
- US Senate and House of Representatives
- Judicial Retention Questions
- FL Governor and Cabinet
- Statewide Constitutional Amendments
- State Legislature
- Ballot Measures

### PRIMARY ELECTIONS

Primary elections are used to determine which candidates will represent each political party in the general election. Florida is a closed primary state, meaning you must be registered with a political party to vote in that party's primary. These elections typically occur in August of even-numbered years, but exact dates can vary.

#### Primary elections include races for:

- County and Local
- Judicial and School
- US Senate and House of Representatives
- Special District
- FL Governor and Cabinet
- State Legislature



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## MIDTERM ELECTIONS

Midterm elections take place in even-numbered years that do not include a presidential race. These elections often receive less attention, but they decide critical state and local leadership positions. Midterms follow the same rules and structure as general elections and are open to all registered voters.

### Midterm elections include races for:

- Florida Governor and Cabinet
- County Local Offices
- US Senate and House of Representatives
- Judicial Retention Questions
- State Legislature
- Statewide Constitutional Amendments
- School Boards and Special Districts
- Ballot Measures

## MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

Municipal elections are held at the city or town level and often follow a schedule set by each municipality's charter. These elections can occur in either even- or odd-numbered years and often draw lower turnout despite having a direct impact on daily life.

### Municipal elections include races for:

- Mayor and City Council
- City Commission
- Local Referenda or Ordinance Changes
- City Clerk or Treasurer
- Municipal judges
- Charter Amendments

## SPECIAL ELECTIONS

Special elections are held outside the regular election cycle to fill unexpected vacancies or decide time-sensitive issues. These elections can be scheduled at any time of year and often have shorter notice periods, so it's important to stay engaged with your local Supervisor of Elections.

### Special elections include races for:

- Vacancies in Local State or Federal Offices
- County or municipal Referenda
- Run-Off Elections
- Special District Seats
- Emergency Tax or Bond Measures
- Charter Amendments

## KEY ELECTION DEADLINES

Knowing the timeline is one of the most important parts of participating in Florida elections. While specific dates vary each cycle, most deadlines follow a predictable pattern. This section provides a general guide to when key actions like registering, requesting a vote-by-mail ballot, or voting early usually take place. Always double-check with your county Supervisor of Elections for the exact dates each year.

ACTION	TYPICAL TIMELINE BEFORE ELECTION DAY
<b>Voter Registration Deadline</b>	29 days before election
<b>Vote-by-Mail Request Deadline</b>	12 days before election by 5:00PM
<b>Early Voting</b>	8-15 days before election (set by county)

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## YOUR VOTING OPTIONS

Florida offers three ways to vote. While all are legal and available to voters, Citizens Defending Freedom encourages in-person voting whenever possible to reduce risk, ensure confidence, and support transparency in the electoral process.



### ELECTION DAY VOTING

- The most direct and secure option
- MUST vote at your assigned precinct
- Polls are open 7am-7pm
- Must bring valid ID with signature



### EARLY IN-PERSON VOTING

- Flexible and reliable if you can't vote on Election Day
- Available 8-15 days before the election (set by county)
- Vote at ANY early voting site in your county
- Must bring valid ID with signature



### VOTE-BY-MAIL (NOT RECOMMENDED)

- Subject to strict verification and deadline requirements
- Requires a ballot request every election cycle
- Signature must match voter file
- Must be received by 7pm on Election Day

View our [How To Vote in Florida Guide](#) for more information.

### VOTER ID REQUIREMENTS

To vote in person in Florida whether during early voting or on Election Day you must present valid identification that includes both a photo and a signature. If your ID lacks a signature, bring another document with your signature (like a credit or debit card).

#### Accepted forms of ID include:

- FL Issued Driver's License or ID Card
- US Passport
- Military ID
- VA Issued Health ID
- Concealed Weapons License
- Government Employee ID Card
- Retirement Center ID
- Neighborhood Association ID
- Student ID (from a Florida college or university)
- Public Assistance ID

