

Lancaster County Board of Elections' tips on how to be a Prepared Voter

1. Know your voter registration status ahead of time, preferably before registration closes, which is 15 days prior to each primary or election. You can confirm that your name, address and party affiliation are current and correct. Voters can check their status online at:
<https://www.pavoterservices.pa.gov/Pages/voterregistrationstatus.aspx>
2. Determine whether you will vote in person at a polling place on election day or by mail. The application for a mail-in or absentee ballot is at www.votespa.com If you have a PA Driver's license or non-driver ID issued by PennDOT, you may apply online. If you chose to apply online and provide an e-mail address, you will be sent status updates by the PA Department of State. The deadline to apply for a regular civilian absentee or a mail-in ballot is 5:00 p.m. the Tuesday before the election. The voted ballot must be returned to the County Board of Elections by 8:00 p.m. election night. Voters who have applied for an absentee or a mail-in ballot are not eligible to vote a regular ballot at a polling place on election day. You can check the status of your absentee or mail-in ballot at: <https://www.pavoterservices.pa.gov/Pages/BallotTracking.aspx>
3. If you are going to vote in person, know where your polling place is located. Lancaster County has 240 polling locations. A registered voter will only appear in the poll book in one polling location. The polling location where their name appears is based upon the residential address on their voter registration application. You can find your polling place in advance online at: <https://www.pavoterservices.pa.gov/Pages/PollingPlaceInfo.aspx>
4. Know what is on your ballot. The Lancaster County Board of Elections posts sample ballots online approximately a month before each primary and election. You can see your sample ballot and any ballot questions at: <http://vr.co.lancaster.pa.us/sampleballots/>
5. When you arrive at the polling place be prepared to give your name to the poll workers. If your name is not easy to spell based upon pronunciation, please feel free to write it down. Our poll workers need to find your name in the poll book, and names are all listed alphabetically. You may be asked to confirm your address or date of birth if there is another voter with a similar or same name.
6. First time voters in a precinct will be asked for ID. For a list of acceptable photo and non-photo IDs see: <https://www.votespa.com/Register-to-Vote/Pages/Voter-ID-for-First-Time-Voters.aspx> This is a requirement which predated PA's voter ID law of 2012 and remained in place after PA's voter ID law was declared unenforceable.
7. Be prepared to read your ballot and mark your desired selections. If you need glasses to read, please bring them along. If you are unable to mark a paper ballot with a pen, Lancaster County has an ADA compliant Ballot Marking Device (BMD) in each precinct. If you have a candidate guide or a list of candidates you want to vote for, you may bring that along too. By law, voters are allowed 3 minutes in the voting booth, so please be ready to mark your ballot when you arrive. Please also take any candidate material you brought in along with you when you leave. A voting equipment video for the scanner and BMD is available on our website.
<https://www.co.lancaster.pa.us/301/Election-Day-Voting>