



Colorado
Secretary of State
Wayne W. Williams



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Voting and Conviction FAQs

Q1. How do felony and misdemeanor convictions, incarceration, parole, and probation affect my voter status?

A1. In Colorado, it is illegal to register to vote or cast a vote while serving a sentence of confinement, detention, or parole for a felony conviction.

Q2. Do I have the right to vote if I am in jail serving a sentence for a misdemeanor conviction?

A2. Yes. An individual in jail serving a misdemeanor sentence has the right to register to vote and vote in any election. You will need to register to vote before the deadline. You will also need to contact the [clerk in the county of your legal residence](#) to update your address information for your ballot.

Q3. Do I have the right to vote if I am in jail awaiting trial?

A3. Yes. Pretrial detainees are eligible to vote. You will need to register to vote before the deadline. You will also need to contact the county clerk and ask for a mail-in ballot. The statute says that your voting eligibility must be certified by an institutional administrator. There is no established process for this. You will need to check with either the county clerk and/or the jail staff for clarification.

Q4. Do I have the right to vote if I am on bond and the criminal case is pending?

A4. Yes. You are eligible to vote if you are on bond as long as you are not convicted and serving a sentence of confinement, detention, or parole for a felony at the time of the election.

Q5. Do I have the right to vote if I am on probation?

A5. Yes. People on probation may register to vote and cast their vote in any election. It is important to understand the difference between probation and parole. Many people confuse the two and think they are the same thing.

- Probation is a sentence ordered by a judge and usually an alternative to prison. A sentence of probation allows a person to remain in the community under the supervision of a probation officer. It is legal to register to vote and cast a vote while under a sentence of probation.
- Parole is a period of supervision after release from prison. In Colorado, parole is considered a part of the sentence. It is illegal to register to vote or cast a vote while on parole. Additionally, a period of Federal Supervised Release is the functional equivalent of parole, and is also considered part of the sentence.

Q6. I have a criminal conviction in my past. Do I have the right to vote if I have served my sentence and successfully completed parole?

A6. Yes. In Colorado, you have the right to vote after you have served your sentence, including parole. The day you are released from parole is the day your eligibility to register to vote is restored. If you were previously registered, that registration will have been canceled and you must re-register to vote.

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Q7. Will I get an official letter telling me when I am eligible to vote?

A7. No. No one will tell you when you are eligible to vote.

Q8. Do I have to prove I have served my sentence and parole in order to register to vote or to vote?

A8. If you submit a voter registration application, but your name still appears in the database as an individual under supervision, you will receive a notice from your county elections office stating that you are not eligible to register and vote. You will have the opportunity to respond stating that the cancellation was in error because you completed your sentence. The election official may have the discretion to ask for proof that you have completed parole (i.e., your parole discharge documentation).

Q9. What if I was convicted for a crime in another state?

A9. Election law varies from state to state, and your right to vote is determined by the state in which you live. If you are a Colorado resident and if you have completed your sentence, including parole, you can register to vote.

Q10. If I was convicted of a federal crime, do I have the right to vote in a federal election?

A10. It does not matter if you were convicted in a state or federal court. Once you are eligible to vote in Colorado, you are eligible to vote in both state and federal elections.

Q11. Do I have to pay off all my restitution before I can vote?

A11. No. Payment of restitution is not a condition of voting eligibility.

Q12. I was registered to vote before I was incarcerated. Do I need to register again?

A12. Yes. If you were registered to vote prior to your incarceration for a felony conviction, your registration will have been canceled, and you must re-register to vote. If you have a Colorado State driver's license or ID card issued by the Department of Revenue you may [register to vote online](#). Paper voter registration forms are also available on the Secretary of State's website.

Q13. What is the charge if I illegally register to vote and vote in an election?

A13. It is a class five felony charge to register to vote or vote in an election for which a person is not legally eligible. Section 1-13-704.5, C.R.S.

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