

Voting 101

Voting for the first time is a once-in-a-lifetime experience. Whether you are voting in a local election, a state election, or a presidential election.

– Here are the **Top 10 Tips** to ease anxiety and take the guesswork out of the experience:

#1 – Check Out the OK Voter Portal

The OK Voter Portal is your go-to resource for voter services. All you need is your name (as it appears on your registration) and your date of birth to access the portal.

Through the portal you can:

- Register to vote or update your registration
- Verify your voter information
- Find your voting districts
- Find your polling place or “early voting” location
- View a sample ballot
- Request an absentee ballot
- Respond to an Address Confirmation Notice

If you have specific questions about your registration or voting – contact your County Election Board.

#2 – Find Your Election

- Find the list of upcoming elections, along with the election calendar for the year on the State Election Board website.
- Sign up for election reminders on the homepage of the State Election Board website.
- Follow us on Twitter and Facebook.
- Check to see if you have a sample ballot in the OK Voter Portal (If you have a sample ballot, you have an election.)

#3 – Know When and Where to Vote

You can vote on Election Day, by mail absentee, or in-person absentee ("early voting".)

- In Oklahoma, if you vote on **Election Day**, you must vote at your assigned polling place in order for your ballot to count. Use the [OK Voter Portal](#) to find your polling place.
- To vote by **mail absentee**, you must request your absentee ballot no later than 5 p.m. the Tuesday before the election. (Effective January 1, 2022, absentee ballots must be requested no later than the third Monday – 15 days – prior to the election.) No excuse is needed. You can request your ballot using the [OK Voter Portal](#).
- Voted ballots must be received by the County Election Board no later than 7 p.m. on election night. "Standard" absentee ballots, the most common type of absentee ballots, may be hand-delivered, but must be delivered no later than the close of business, on the day prior to the election. [Learn more about absentee voting.](#)
- **In-person absentee** voting or "early voting" is available prior to every election and is held at a special "early voting" location. Every county has a least one "early voting" site. [Find your "early voting" location, dates and times.](#) Anyone can vote early. No excuse is needed.

#4 – View a Sample Ballot

Voting is less intimidating if you know **exactly** what is on the ballot. We recommend using the [OK Voter Portal](#) to view a sample ballot before you head to the polls. Sample ballots in the portal are specific to each voter and ensure there are no surprises when you go to vote. By viewing the sample ballot, you can read through state and county questions or make notes to take with you to your voting location. You can also request a sample ballot by contacting your [County Election Board](#).

#5 – Show Up Prepared

- Have your valid ID ready to show poll workers. **Proof of identity is required every time you vote.** You will find the list of accepted identification on the State Election Board website.

IMPORTANT: If you do not have a valid ID, do not leave your polling place. Ask a poll worker for a provisional ballot.

- Do not wear or bring anything to vote that could be considered “electioneering.” “Electioneering” is advocating for or against a candidate or issue on the ballot. It is a crime to “electioneer” within 300 feet of the entrance to a polling place or in-person absentee voting site or a person who is standing in line to vote outside the polling place or in-person absentee voting site while an election is in progress.
- Bring your notes. While you may not have any written material other than that provided by election officials within 300 feet of the entrance to a polling place or in-person absentee voting site or a person who is standing in line to vote outside the polling place or in-person absentee voting site while an election is in progress, it is acceptable to bring notes or a marked sample ballot to assist you with the voting process. Notes or sample ballots should be kept out of public view until you are ready to mark your ballot.

#6 – Know What to Expect

When you get to the front of the check-in line, the poll worker will ask you for your name and your ID. **Be prepared to show your ID.** Once the poll worker has found your name in the precinct registry and checked to be sure the name on your ID matches the name in the registry, you will be asked to **sign the registry next to your name.** You will then be issued a ballot (or multiple ballots.)

Voting instructions are on the ballot and can also be found inside the voting booth.

Mark your ballot, then take it to the voting device and insert it into the machine. You can insert your ballot face up or face down. The machine will read your ballot regardless of the direction. The voting device will confirm that your ballot was counted.

If the voting device rejects your ballot, the screen will indicate the reason. You can override the rejection or take your “spoiled” ballot back to the poll worker and request a new ballot.

#7 – Understand Your Rights

Your right to vote is important. If you believe you are at your correct polling place, but there is a dispute regarding your voter registration, you may **request a provisional ballot**.

You have the right to request a provisional ballot:

- if you do not have a valid ID,
- if your name is not in the precinct registry, or
- if you believe your voting information is incorrect and affects your ability to receive certain ballots – for example, to vote in a party’s primary election.

To receive a provisional ballot, you will need to sign a Provisional Ballot Affidavit and the Provisional Ballot Roster.

After the election and before results are certified, the Secretary of the County Election Board will research your voter registration information. If your eligibility can be verified – your ballot will be counted.

If you have a disability and would like to vote using an audio-assisted ballot, please let a poll worker know and they will assist you. All voting devices, in every precinct, are equipped with an audio tactile interface (ATI) to provide disabled voters with the ability to cast their ballot privately and independently.

#8 – Wait to Post and Share

Who doesn't want to commemorate their first voting moment? Feel free to take a selfie or a picture of your marked ballot – but **don't post your picture to social media or share it with anyone until you are outside of the election enclosure.** (The election enclosure is the area where voters are checked in, issued ballots, and vote.)

In Oklahoma, it is actually a crime to disclose how you voted, while you are still inside the election enclosure.

#9 – Don't Forget Your Sticker

Be sure to get an "I Voted" sticker before you leave the election enclosure and wear it to encourage others to get out and vote!

#10 – Follow Live Election Results

There's nothing like following live election results and knowing that your vote is among those on the results page – making a difference. You can catch [live election results](#) for every election on the State Election Board website. Look for the link at the top of the homepage or go to the "[election results page](#)." Results begin coming into the Election Board after 7 p.m. on election night.

One Last Thing...

Don't wait for the next election to make sure your registration is current and risk missing an election! **Voter registration (which includes registration updates) closes 24 days prior to an election.** Check your registration periodically using the [OK Voter Portal](#).

Don't forget! If you move to a new county, you will need to submit a new [Voter Registration Application](#).

Questions?

Contact your [County Election Board](#) or the State Election Board at (405) 521-2391 or info@elections.ok.gov. We're here to help!